









LIFE AT THE SOUTH:

OR

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN" AS IT IS.

BEING

NARRATIVES, SCENES, AND INCIDENTS

IN THE

REAL "LIFE OF THE LOWLY."

By W. L. G. SMITH.

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To the Memory
OF
HENRY CLAY,
THE ADVOCATE OF THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY,
AND
FRIEND OF THE CONSTITUTION OF HIS COUNTRY
IN EVERY RESPECT,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E .

THE object which the author of the following story has in view, is to represent the relations between master and slave. To do this, it was necessary to depict the passions and sentiments as the same are usually found to exist in the every-day scenes of life.

The lot of the latter must necessarily be humble, as society is at present constituted; whilst that of the former, as an inevitable consequence, seems to be more exalted.

The farmer at the North shares the toils of the field from necessity, or choice, or both; the planter at the South is a husbandman, it is true, but is not so apt to participate in the toil of tillage and harvest.

Every nation, and many parts of the same nation — especially when it embraces a continent like that of the United States of America, with diversified soils and various climates — have their own customs and modes of livelihood. The people are born and educated under the institutions peculiar to their own locality, and strange would it be, if they did not become attached to them, and ready to repel assaults, come from whatever quarter they may.

Statesmen and philanthropists — who look to the perpetuity of the Union of the several States which compose this

confederacy, and are unwilling to hazard the invaluable blessings which every person in the country, whether bond or free, daily enjoys under it—have always considered the question of Slavery a delicate subject. And if it is a stain on our national character, as is frequently alleged, they consider it an heir-loom which has descended with the immortal charter of independence, and that the curse, if any, appropriately belongs to the Fathers of the Republic.

If the historian has given us a true record, there have been “hewers of wood and drawers of water” in every clime and age since the days of Adam. Disinterested philanthropy looks to the amelioration of all conditions, and the enlightenment of all classes of society. And although the lot of the slave may be regarded as the lowest in the scale, still, the candid-minded in every section of our country, indulge the hope, that the day will yet come when the descendants of Ham will be gathered together in the land of their ancestors, and Liberia, in God’s own good time, take its position among the independent states of the world.

It is proper to observe, that some of the embellishments which illustrate this book have been kindly furnished by Mr. G. P. Putnam, the publisher of Mr. Kennedy’s “Swallow Barn.”

BUFFALO, JULY 30th, 1852.

LIFE AT THE SOUTH:

OR

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN AS IT IS.

CHAPTER I.

“OLD VIRGINIA.”

“WHO is not familiar with the history of the *Old Dominion?*” remarked a portly-appearing gentleman, seated at his ease in the portico of the United States Hotel, at Washington, some years since. “And where is her equal, sir, in all that’s good and chivalrous?” he added, with the view of engaging the attention of a member of Congress, who just then took a seat by his side.

“Ah, Mr. Erskine,” replied the person addressed, “I find you ‘still harping on my daughter.’ Her history is good so far as it goes; but it does not go far enough. It is the *unwritten* pages which we of the North take exceptions to.”

“Beg your pardon, Mr. Pettibone, but if you will allow me, sir, I say not one of her sons would consent to strike out one iota of *that* history. We are proud,

sir, of our lineage, and customs, and polity, and we would record it—*all* of it, for the benefit of our descendants.”

“Ah! yes, Mr. Erskine, yes, yes, that’s all very well. But, we of the North hear of many scenes and events, daily occurring upon your plantations, which disturb our sensibilities; and as we have good authority for believing that all men are born free and equal, we, that is to say, myself and those who act with me, are determined to take the matter in hand ourselves, and relieve the oppressed.”

“That is to say, Mr. Pettibone, you will pass by the abuses and unhappiness of your own home and fireside, and interest yourself exclusively with those of your neighbor. And then”—

“No, no!” interrupted Mr. Pettibone, in rather a sharp tone of voice, evidently nettled at this opportune intimation.

“And then,” continued Mr. Erskine, who was determined to conclude his reply before Mr. Pettibone, who was then rising from his seat, passed out of the portico, “you flatter yourselves with an impression that you are ameliorating the condition of the down-trodden, and call this service philanthropy!”

Mr. Pettibone was, all of a sudden, in a hurry to get up to the capitol, as he had the floor that day in the “House.”

Mr. Erskine, as the reader perhaps may have already anticipated, was a Virginia “gentleman of the old school,” of refined sentiments and manners, and the owner of a large landed estate, situate in the county

of Frederick, west of the Blue Ridge range of mountains. That estate had been his home for more than half a century, and came into his possession as the legitimate inheritance from his ancestor. Plentifully stocked with negroes that were born and reared there, the plantation was "well worked," and yielded, from year to year, an abundant harvest. Notwithstanding he was thus favored with the riches of this world, and the blessings and pleasures consequent thereon, he did not occupy a singular position, nor was he isolated from his fellow-citizens. It was not a remarkable nor uncommon condition in that latitude. Whoever, at the time of which we write, or at this day, should traverse the country lying between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany mountains, would pass over many a plantation, as fair and pleasant as that of Mr. Erskine, and as well supplied with an abject race of humanity. We say abject, but do not mean worthless; for the traveling observer would find the race really "hewers of wood and drawers of water," such as it had been through a long series of generations. And if, with the calm and unbiased feelings of an enlightened philanthropy, the traveler should stop to inquire into the reason of this servitude, and with his own personal observation inspect its condition and diversified relations, in their almost endless variety and multiplicity of detail, he probably would not fail to discover, long before the task was completed, an unexpected ligament existing between master and slave—one, indeed, most difficult to sever, even if the statutes of the Commonwealth were annulled—

namely, the strong cord of affection; and composed, if we may be allowed the expression, of the strands of uniform kindness and sincere attachment compactly and firmly twisted together.

The manners and customs of the inhabitants of this region of country, to which we have referred, may have undergone some modification, or change, in the year 1839, from what it was during the first quarter of the present century. Some of their descendants, at intervals, may have bidden adieu to the land of their nativity, and passing into other states, there taken up their abode: some settling themselves upon plantations beneath a more southern sky and in a balmy climate, and adding to their "worldly stock of goods" by a steady annual income derived from their luxuriant fields of rice and cotton; and others, peopling the marts of the south and southwest, occupying the time in trade and traffic, or embracing the "learned professions," spending their lives in expounding the law, preaching the gospel, or healing "the ills which flesh is heir to." In fact, the state of Virginia, which has been so appropriately styled "the mother of presidents," has also been to a very great extent the mother of states. Many a son of her's was the first to fire the rifle, use the axe and spade, and build the log cabin, in all that great area of country washed by the waters of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and their countless tributaries. Her laws and institutions have made their impress upon the minds of lawgivers, given shape and tone to legislation, until, under their benign

influence, the forest, savanna, and prairie have been converted into towns, hamlets, and cities, and occupied by people in the enjoyment of the comforts and pleasures, elegance and refinement of civilization.

But if the "looker on in Vienna" desires to take a more extended observation, and, descending from the higher or middling classes, view Southern society in its humblest form, the vision should not be strained through the magnifying lenses of idle rumor and imaginative story. The life and livelihood of the slave should be seen with the naked eyesight, and viewed as it is; not confining the observation to extreme cases of happiness or misery, but scanning it "as a whole," wherever the institution of slavery is recognized by the law of the land. And then, if this impartial examination should satisfy the mind that the natural laws of humanity had been violated; and the gratification of that sentiment which is common to all mankind — the love and pursuit of happiness — not allowed, and beyond the pale of hope, the philanthropist might murmur with propriety, and look around for the remedy — some potent elixir — which would remove this cancer from the body politic.

As it is not our desire, so we do not deem it to be our duty, to grope our way through the labyrinthian mazes of a speculative philosophy, and endeavor "to catch a sight" of some fanciful object of philanthropy in the distempered imaginings of an excited brain. The true moralist is content to view nature as he finds it, and rehearse to the listener the actual, every-day scenes of life, as they ordinarily occur in their various

phases. And the story which is recited in the following pages will discover to the reader an unvarnished narrative of what has occurred more than once, during the last dozen years, north of the Potomac.

To return from our digression to Mr. Erskine. He had now (we may as well mention the time, it was in the winter of 1839,) for the first time in many years, visited the federal metropolis. He had a two-fold purpose in view, for making the visit at the present time. First, for pleasure and the improvement of his acquaintance; and secondly, to inform himself of the real state of the slavery question before the country. As he had observed, in reading over the proceedings of Congress, that the subject was frequently discussed there, and sometimes with great warmth, and apparently with the belief that it was an evil and a curse, he was becoming somewhat alarmed, for he did not know what might be the result of this agitation in Virginia. No sooner had he arrived in Washington than he commenced his inquiries. He paid his respects to the President, and was informed by that high functionary that there was no occasion for any uneasiness; that the debates in the "House" were a mere fau-faronade got up for political effect, and intended for a different meridian. And being further informed by the chief magistrate of the republic, that a large majority of the freemen of the *Old Dominion* were too much loved and respected by the party in power, ever to allow them to be disturbed in the enjoyment of their hereditary rights; and that all assaults upon their political privileges, come from whatsoever quarter they might,

would be triumphantly repelled, the fears of Mr. Erskine were allayed, and he left the *White House* with hearty thanks for the intelligence he had received, and promenaded Pennsylvania Avenue with perfect composure.

It was the following morning, that the colloquy occurred between him and Mr. Pettibone, as above detailed. As the latter-named personage remarked, when he left the portico, that he had the floor that day in the *House*, Mr. Erskine at once determined to go up to the capitol himself, and remain a quiet spectator of that day's *sitting*. He stopped for a moment in the corridor leading from the rotunda to the galleries of the *House*, and not observing the member from the Frederick District, he presently wound his way up the marble stairs, and reaching the door of the gentlemen's gallery, he took his diagram and examined it attentively, for the purpose of finding Mr. Pettibone's seat, so as to locate himself in full view of the orator. His desire was very easily gratified, for all the benches were unoccupied. The speaker had not as yet called the *House* to order, and but few members were at their desks. Mr. Erskine amused himself in glancing at the beautiful architecture, and admiring the elegance and grandeur of the hall. In a few moments, the honorable members began to come in, and among them Mr. Pettibone. Busy in conversation, and giving the usual salutation to each other, the echo of their voices created such a buzz as to make the sensation quite painful to the ears of Mr. Erskine. The Speaker's mallet, however, soon brought order out of chaos,

and the clerk was reading the journal of the previous day, with such impetuous rapidity that its contents were imperfectly understood by the stranger. The eyes of Mr. Erskine fell upon the orator of the day, who was seated at his desk, perusing a newspaper, with as much *nonchalance* as if he had been lounging in the reading-room of an hotel. Such lack of urbanity, and such inappropriate demeanor—at least in the estimation of Mr. Erskine—so shocked his sense of propriety, and was such gross and almost unpardonable infringement of the most common code of politeness, that he was almost inclined to leave the gallery, or to treat the expected speech with disdain, and not pay it the respect of attentive listening. But, upon casting his eyes around the *House*, he observed many of the members occupying the time in the same way, or else opening their little mail bags, and untying and unfolding, and casting a mere glance at, or reading at length, letters and papers—parcel after parcel—so much so, that he concluded such behavior was provided for “by the rules,” and that perhaps an opposite line of conduct would there be deemed an anomaly, if not an eccentricity. Never having had the honor of a seat in a legislative assembly, and ignorant of all parliamentary conduct save that contained in Jefferson’s Manual, the surprise of Mr. Erskine on this occasion ought not to be wondered at by those who are familiar with Congressional deportment. Be this as it may, Mr. Erskine remained patiently in his position, and in due time the Speaker announced the “special order.” It turned out to be

the question whether a petition, praying for the passage of an act abolishing the traffic of slavery in the District of Columbia, should be respectfully received or thrown under the table. Mr. Pettibone being entitled to *the floor*, rose in his place, and proceeded to give his views in the affirmative. Mr. Erskine, from the fame of the orator,—at least in the frequent mention of his name in the newspapers—expected to see a crowded auditory; but perceiving nearly all the benches unoccupied, he was surprised at its thinness. And then again was he surprised, that Mr. Pettibone's arguments or eloquence failed to enchain the attention of his fellow-members; and, instead of an attractive, appeared to possess, so far as he could discover, a repelling influence. For one seat after another was gradually becoming vacant, until, if a *count* had been taken, scarcely a quorum was in attendance; and not even that, if the sergeant-at-arms had omitted the stragglers in the lobby. Nevertheless, however inauspicious such circumstances might be of a good, sensible, or brilliant speech, Mr. Erskine's desire to hear the sentiments *verbatim et literatim* of this renowned opponent of the "domestic institution," remained unabated, and so he resolved to "sit it out." Mr. Pettibone proceeded to deliver his views at random, as it seemed to Mr. Erskine; for he had an ass's load of pamphlets and periodicals at his elbow, which he referred to and read from in rotation; some of them giving an account of the adventures and hair-breadth escapes of the friends of the colored man, and others containing graphical descriptions of slavery and its

evil tendencies. But like the race-horse, which on the last quarter quickens his speed for the winning post, Mr. Pettibone, as he approached the termination of his speech, became more and more rapid in his elocution, and more frequent in his gesticulation. These movements were communicated by the pages in attendance to the honorable gentlemen outside, who now began to flock into the "Hall," with the same alacrity that the horse-courser and jockey repair to the judges' stand on the race-ground. The pointer of the clock, which was placed directly over the main entrance, and in full view of the speaker, soon designated the hour specified for the committee to rise, and the rap of the mallet brought up Mr. Pettibone "all standing." He was not *quite* through, and asked for further time. But the "party in power" did not fancy the topic under debate. His request was not acceded to, and he very reluctantly resumed his seat. Mr. Erskine regarded the speech as a mere harangue, and he would have left the gallery much disappointed, were it not for the suggestions of the President, which prepared his mind in advance for something of the sort he had heard. Although meant for an attack on Southern rights, he believed it would be perfectly harmless, and his feelings were becoming more and more gratified, that he had taken the trouble to visit Washington. A man of candor himself, he thought Mr. Pettibone the same. And as he conjectured that Mr. Pettibone took the course he was pursuing, on the subject of slavery, from erroneous sentiments founded upon false statements, he made up his mind to avail himself of the first opportunity he might

have, to set Mr. Pettibone right. Especially, as he again and again, on that day, had reiterated that he relied, "for the rectitude of his conduct," upon the facts, as he was pleased to term them, which he recited at length to the audience, Mr. Erskine thought he should perform an act of kindness to him, and at the same time, in a quiet and gentlemanly way, vindicate himself and neighbors from the false and ungenerous imputations which it was becoming fashionable in certain quarters constantly to cast upon them. And believing that Mr. Pettibone was actuated solely by the impulses of genuine philanthropy, he did not anticipate much difficulty in undeceiving him. Mr. Erskine accordingly retired from the gallery in a happy mood, and returned to his hotel.

Some few days afterward, Mr. Erskine met Mr. Pettibone at a private dinner-party given by the member from Frederick. Mr. Pettibone was fond of hilarity and a good joke, and so was Mr. Erskine, and they were passing together a very jovial hour. As they were becoming merry enough to throw off the restraint or coldness which on other occasions probably would characterize their conduct toward one another, Mr. Erskine improved the opportunity to rally his companion upon the slavery topic, with the view of testing his sincerity.

"I never had the honor of listening to a speech in Congress until I heard you," said he, "and I listened with attention."

Mr. Pettibone's vanity was his great weakness, and

he received Mr. Erskine's remark as a compliment, and replied accordingly.

“From what passed between us that morning at the hotel, I expected to hear some of the *unwritten* history of my state,” added Mr. Erskine, dryly, “but I perceived that you occasionally read from—may I ask from what?”

“Yes, sir, certainly,” replied Mr. Pettibone, shoving back his chair from the table sufficiently to enable him to turn it aslant toward Mr. Erskine, “why certainly, sir,” he continued, beginning to think that he had made an impression on the mind of Mr. Erskine, “the facts which I narrated in my speech I obtained from the ‘Emancipator,’ and the documents from which I read to the *House* are pamphlets compiled with much particularity”—

“I noticed the *particularity*,” interrupted Mr. Erskine.

“And with great care and accuracy, by compilers at the North who have traveled through many parts of the Southern country.”

“And it is upon such data that you form your opinions of us slaveholders?”

“Oh! sir, those are only a small sample of the innumerable wrongs inflicted upon our colored brethren. The half, sir, has not been told.”

“It would really be quite gratifying to me,” very pleasantly remarked Mr. Erskine, “to know where, in all the South, such scenes occur—”

“They are common to all parts of *slavedom*; I hear of no exceptions.”

“And, Mr. Pettibone, the circumstances—the circumstances, sir, under which they occur. For I can readily imagine that isolated instances may occur. The lash with us may supply the place of the felon’s cell with you; and the colored man of the South, I presume, labors in the field and shop, just like the white man at the North.”

“With this marked difference,” quickly responded Mr. Pettibone, under the belief that he had his adversary *on the hip*, “the white man labors according to his own will, and is master of his own wages.”

“Yes, ah! yes, Mr. Pettibone; and if I am not wrongly posted up, you also have your poor houses for the idlers and superannuated, and your jails for your spendthrifts and insolvents.”

Mr. Pettibone felt his inability to sustain himself in this *tete a tete*, unless he took higher ground.

“You will understand us, Mr. Erskine, to take the position we do, not because we desire to carp at your manners and customs, but because we think your *institution* incompatible with our religious notions and sensations, and uncongenial with true republican liberty.”

“And therefore you do not hesitate to set at naught that sacred ark of our liberty—the Constitution—which tolerates all religions; and are in too much haste to await the gradual emancipation of the slaves in the order of time allotted by Providence.”

“You are facetious, Mr. Erskine; trifling, sir. Perhaps you have not been over on the island,” said Mr.

Pettibone, evidently annoyed by the replies of the planter.

“Ah! what have you there?”

“What is called, in common parlance, a slave pen.”

“A slave *pen*! and pray, what use is made of that?”

“Oh! a sort of sty, to shut up the blacks in—a place to jockey in for human flesh, sir!” said Mr. Pettibone, with considerable vehemence.

“Ah, yes! a slave-mart,” replied Mr. Erskine, with great composure.

“Common—common, I presume, sir, with you in the South; for I perceive it occasions you no surprise.”

“Not at all; not at all. It is the first I have visited. We do not have such in Old Virginia. If we part with one of our blacks, it is at our own door; and that ’s done hardly once in an age.”

“Great evil; all wrong, Mr. Erskine. It ’s a curse to the country—a libel on free America.”

“It is very easy so to *say*. But, Mr. Pettibone, if slavery was converted into freedom, what ’s to become of the poor creatures? You could not *hire* them, I ’ll be bound, to go away; and if they stayed, would not know how to live.”

“Such might be the case with the present grown generation. But the younger, and their future descendants, would be educated, and would learn *how to live*. We look forward to the future.”

“And, Mr. Pettibone, do you really think that they would be happier?”

"Yes, both now and hereafter; they would be, then, moral beings — accountable beings; not only the semblance, but the substance of humanity."

"As for their present state, they could not be happier; and so far as the future is concerned, I leave that to the theologians. The argument that they are not now accountable beings proves too much for you, I suspect. As to their welfare in the world to come, they may be classed with 'the little children' spoken of in the Testament, for aught I know."

"No body that holds a human soul can be happy in chains, be it black or white, either in a heathen or christian land."

"There it is — you now meet the point, Mr. Pettibone. I have been fearful that such sentiments obtained in the Free States. The mistake is unfortunate."

"Oh! no mistake — *no* mistake, sir," rejoined Mr. Pettibone, with a smile on his countenance.

"But, I affirm it is a mistake," said Mr. Erskine, with more earnestness of manner; "and," he continued, "it would delight me to convince you, by a personal observation of that society, of which you now get your notions at second hand. Come, go with me into the interior of Old Virginny, and view the life of the lowly, as it is."

"Thank you, Mr. Erskine, thank you. My duties at the capitol are too pressing to allow me that pleasure. It's the short session, you are aware, and we are already into February."

"It would be impolite to urge you. Your company, however, would give me infinite gratification, sir."

"Thank you, Mr. Erskine, thank you."

"The spring with you is not half so delightful as it is with us. Say after the adjournment—any time you may please to name, and I shall be happy to entertain you."

"Really, Mr. Erskine, you are very kind. I should enjoy Virginia hospitality, I know; besides, I have never passed an hour upon a plantation."

"So I supposed. I venture to predict new views to you."

"Perhaps, more practical. May I ask when you leave Washington?"

"To-morrow."

"I will retain your invitation, and write you in a few days, if agreeable."

"Do, and I hope that you will find it convenient to make the visit."

Mr. Pettibone bowed very amiably, and having an engagement to fulfill that evening, excused himself from the dinner-board, and withdrew. Mr. Erskine remained to participate in the further entertainment of his representative, and reached his apartment at the hotel at a late hour.

CHAPTER II.

THE PLANTATION—UNCLE TOM'S LAZINESS

“The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty varying round ;
The haughtiest breast its wish might bound,
Through life to dwell delighted here ;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To nature and to me so dear.”

A few miles from the town of Millwood, in the county of Frederick and state of Virginia, was situated the plantation of Mr. Erskine. Viewed in all aspects, it was as fine a plantation as the sun ever shone upon. Its proprietor was born and bred there. It, in the year 1839, had been his home, and to all intents and purposes his world, for more than sixty years. The lovely waters of the Shenandoah meandered in graceful curves through the valley ; and the banks of the river were studded, at intervals, with the beautiful, wide-spreading, and lofty trees of the forest, some of which had stood there beyond the recollection of the eldest inhabitant. The high hills and bluff mountains, with their crags and precipices, called the Blue Ridge,

skirted the eastern horizon, and far away to the west could be discerned, in the dim distance, the swelling peaks and towering summits of the Alleghanies.

The domain of Mr. Erskine extended along the river for nearly a mile; and not far from the center, upon a slight acclivity near its bank, had stood for many years the family mansion. It lay, as it were, embowered amid "some oaks and elms," whose uppermost limbs seemed to repose upon the roof. A lawn, lined on each side with a row of high poplars, reached from the piazza to the public road, tastefully graveled; and a garden lay upon the left, with its beds and walks, the work of years. The river made a large bend here; and, if traced upon paper, it would have the resemblance of a semicircle. The mansion was so located, that a view of the river could be obtained from either extremity of the main hall, which was opened into, both front and rear, by doors of similar size. There was nothing peculiar in its architecture from many others upon the wayside; commodious, and partitioned into suitable rooms, and furnished with simple but elegant furniture, it presented an inviting appearance, and was worthy of its occupant.

The plantation was worked by slaves, reared there, and who formed "part and parcel" of the estate. Corn and tobacco were the staple articles of production. The land was easy to till, and yielded an abundant harvest. The outbuildings, fences, and implements of industry—the pastures, meadows, and other enclosures, wore the appearance of thrift; and above all, the long range, or, more accurately speaking, hamlet of

small white buildings, which occupied a long knoll of ground at the distance of, say some two hundred rods from the mansion, appeared to be the abode of contentment and quiet happiness. The traveler would pause to view the prospect, and as he passed along the highway, gaze with lingering admiration. In the woods, there was plenty of game, whilst the river, and the numerous creeks which flowed into it from the neighboring hills, furnished an unfailing supply of trout and pickerel; and frequent and great was the fun and merriment enjoyed there by both "bond and free."

Mr. Erskine's slaves were commensurate in number to the extent of his possessions; and like others, of similar condition, he entrusted the direction of the "heavy work" to an overseer. The reader must not suppose that all toiled in the field. Their duties and ordinary routine of labor, were as various and independent as those of citizens of some northern village. Some labored in the tillage of the land, and others were mere servants; but all acknowledged a common master.

The winter of the year to which we have referred, was uncommonly rigorous for this latitude. Snow, to the depth of several inches, covered the earth as late even as the first days in March; and the overseer was "behind in getting in the spring crops." He, therefore, hurried the work on the plantation, and urged the slaves to toil the harder. It was high time that the corn-fields, in particular, should be put into proper condition, and the seed planted. Mr. Erskine was

absent, at Washington, when the overseer commenced in earnest the spring work. The slaves had a desire, if not some sort of pride, to get the seed into the ground; for they even had an indistinct, but, as it seemed, not a very forcible impression, that unless the seed was planted — there would be no yield; and they, by no means, fancied the idea of *short commons*. And yet, they did not appreciate the importance of such great haste as the overseer manifested. If, by constant urging, their exertions were quickened in the least, they would shortly relapse into their usual slow, *jog-trot* manner of work; between which and absolute laziness — as the latter term is commonly understood — there was not a very wide margin. The overseer, however, had calculated the time when he would have the work completed, and to guard against a failure, he concluded that he would not rely simply on the virtues of corporal punishment, but would also try *moral persuasion*. As the love of gain is one of the most prominent incentives to exertion, he promised the slaves an increase of their weekly stipend. To several of them, this lure was sufficiently attractive to produce the effect desired; whilst, in others, it created no sensation, unless it might be that of levity. Most of them, however, went to the field on the morning of the next day, with an apparent determination to do their best.

The field where they went to work lay along the river, and contained some fifty acres of land. The soil was of a darkish color, easy to turn and shift with the hoe, being a mixture of sand and gravel which had

gradually accumulated there, from the overflows of the Shenandoah. The negroes took hold of it, as if they meant to do something. It was amusing to see them strive to get ahead, and catch up with each other. Some dropped the seeds, and others covered them with the earth. Old and young, men and boys, were busy.

“Take care, Hector, cover not too deep, or we shall never hear from them kernels,” said the overseer to a broad-shouldered, strapping negro, who was taking the lead, and plying the hoe with uncommon rapidity.

“Hst! massa, I’m, I’m into him dis time. I takes all dem niggers down, dis time, massa, hst! Out of de way, Jack, hst! Lor’, how I make de dust rise.” replied the slave, very good-humoredly, and progressing more rapidly than before.

“Wha’ dat you say, nigger?” shouted — another slave, who was tall and spindle-shanked, with gray hairs occasionally showing themselves on the top of his head — sufficiently so to make his appearance rather interesting; and who was evidently an heirloom to the estate, and known on the plantation as Uncle Tom. “Wha’ dat you say? beat dis nigger, will you! I’s I; try dat on, nigger. Be hasty wid dat corn, Joe, drop him squar in de hole! Dis old nigger is arter dat young ’un, dar. Hst! out of de way wid you!” said he, and threw his whole soul into the work.

The overseer was delighted, and congratulated himself that he had hit upon the right expedient to make the negroes work according to his desire. Hector and

Uncle Tom crowded each other hard, and the contest, as they were nearing the opposite side of the field, seemed to be *neck and neck*, to use the sportsman's phrase. The length of the rows of hills, in which the corn was planted, was nearly of a quarter of a mile in distance. It was a long reach to make without stopping; but Hector and Uncle Tom were on a race. Uncle Tom had hitherto been the foremost and most sturdy of the clan, on that or the adjoining plantations; and when he made an effort in downright earnestness, usually had been victorious, no matter what it was. Long before they reached the other side of the field, they parted company with their fellow corn-planters, who one by one dropped behind; and when they were "on the last quarter," the contest was so exciting that the laggards stopped, leaned on their hoes, and *took a look*.

"Gosh, Jeff, look you dar!"

"Da's it! I see, Cæsar."

"Ki, Jeff! enty ol' Uncle Tom down dis time; ha, ha! gosh! Zip, wha' you guine to do now? Dar's no use."

"Yas. Da's it; Hector is out. Lor'! is n't dat ole fellar busted now!" said Jeff, and laughed as if he would split his throat.

"What are you standing there for, you lazy clod-poles! Handle them hoes, and make yourselves busy, or you will never get to the end of your rows," said the overseer to the negroes, vexed at their stupidity.

"Sa, massa!" exclaimed Cæsar, with an expression

of amazement in his countenance, that the overseer did not appreciate the spectacle.

"I say, use them hoes, and not stand there looking all day, doing nothing," reiterated the overseer.

"Yas, massa, yas," replied the negroes together, complying with the order, and showing the white of their eyes, as they cast an occasional glance to the other side of the field.

"And, Jim, let me see the kernels come out of the corn-bag fast," added the overseer, to a little urchin who was dropping the seed for these planters to cover up.

"Hold up, you little cur! not so many, not so many in a hill; why, if you are not careful, the seed will not hold out, and then we *shall* be in a nice box."

Jim was huffy, because he could not stop and see the race longer; and it was all the same to him, whether he dropped the designated number of kernels, or threw a handfull into the *pit*, as he called it. Cæsar, Jeff, and the rest of them, were also huffy, and from the same cause; and it did not grieve them in the least, to see the waste of the seed, but they chuckled over it.

"Gosh! Jeff, massa's corn will be short, long 'fore night, if he drop um in dis way."

"Ki! Cæsar, dar's no use to talk about it; let 'em cum; we cover up jeest as fast. When it's all gone, we'll go down to de river and fish all arternoon; da's it."

"Wha' dat? Wha'! you 'spose massa guine to

turn us off dis time o' day. Gosh! Jeff, do n't make a fool ob yourself."

The overseer had stepped ahead a short distance, and halted until the planters come up with him.

"There, Jim, careful — careful in the number. Be scarce with it — scarce, Jim," said the overseer.

"Sa, massa, sa!" answered the cunning little seedsman, who at once halted, pretending that he did not understand the overseer's remark.

"Keep at your work, you black dolt! what do you stop for?"

"Sa, massa!" exclaimed Jim, with more *apparent* bewilderment than ever.

"Sa, massa! I'll *sa* you, if you do n't keep that corn dropping out of the pouch. At your work, or Jeff and all the rest of them will soon stop, and take *another look*."

"Yas, massa," said Jim, and he resumed his task.

"I say, be scarce with the seeds!" reiterated the overseer, losing, in some measure, his equanimity of temper.

"Yas, massa."

"Or corncake will be scarce in these parts next season, I'll warrant ye."

"Dunno, massa," drawled Jim, and the overseer again walked ahead.

"Dat young nigger no fool; he's up with massa, eber time," remarked Jeff, chuckling over this idea.

In a few moments they approached Hector and Uncle Tom, on the way back, working with all their might. The overseer was delighted, and eyed them

attentively. As the sportsman would say, Uncle Tom had bottom and girth, and when these rival planters commenced their return from the opposite side of the field, Hector had the start; but Uncle Tom was now gaining rapidly; and his long, sinewy arms, with scarcely a pound of flesh thereon, enabled him to handle the hoe with wonderful dexterity. Hector began to flag, and evidently felt that his antagonist was an overmatch for him. He, however, looked neither to the right nor left, but settled himself into the work with all the physical power at his command. Their seedsmen, Jack and Joe, had no time to loiter; neither did they appear to have any inclination to do so. For each took as much interest in the success of his planter as the rider does in the speed of his nag on the race-course. As they came abreast of Cæsar and Jeff, the eyes of all the negroes were upon them. Both were determined not to be outdone by the other — especially at that point, in full view of the spectators — and each worked the harder. Hector held his own; and as they passed on, Uncle Tom was still behind.

“Come, come,” said the overseer, “you have had your look again; now use your own hoes, and let Hector and Uncle Tom fight it out.”

“Sa! massa.”

“I say, plant away yourselves, and let Hector and Uncle Tom fight it out.”

“Yas, massa.”

“Dat ’s it — dat ’s *it*!” said Jeff to Cæsar.

“Gosh! de ole fence will fotch ’um, I be boun’,” said Cæsar to Jeff; and they began leisurely to use

the hoes. The progress of this squad was anything but fast. They worked as if they meant to make sure work, and not botch it; that is to say, if the time consumed is to be taken as evidence of their intention. It is just to say, however, that *they* finally reached the end of the row, and commenced "working back." And in this manner did they toil on the remainder of the day.

"Dar!" shouted Hector, as he covered the last hill in his row; "dar, ole nigger, I 'spects you gib 'um up!" throwing his hoe upon his left shoulder with an air of triumph.

"Wha's dat?" muttered Uncle Tom, almost exhausted with his labor.

"I 'spects you 're satisfactory. I too big hoss for Uncle Tom; I take de wictory."

"Dunno," said Uncle Tom, in a growling tone of voice, ashamed to acknowledge the triumph, and vexed that he was beaten.

"Wha! Dunno? Try 'um again, den. I'm off like a four year ole. Dar, ole hoe!" removing it from his shoulder, and throwing it upon the ground; "wha! you do n't cotch 'um up, Uncle Tom! I's do 'um. So, ole hoe," taking it up, "we go togedder, for good or worsen," spitting on his hands, and humming to himself some favorite ditty.

Uncle Tom showed no particular haste to renew the work on another row; and his hoe did not move over the ground as fast as usual. In fact, so tardy were his movements, that it was not long before Cæsar and Jeff came up with him. This gave him additional



annoyance, and he was very restive under their jokes and gibes. He purposely fell behind; for, of all things, he disliked to be a butt for ridicule and merriment. Cowed by his defeat, he did not feel any inclination, with his drooping spirits, to be sportive. Long before midday, he was not much better than an idler. The overseer, of course, noticed this unusual conduct, and gave him a jog. This did not have the desired effect. The overseer reminded him of his duty, and urged him to work with greater zeal. The overseer attributed his disinclination to labor more efficientlly, to some chagrin which the defeat might have created; and he was disposed, at first, to humor the slave, and let him have his own way. But, when the negroes came into the field after dinner, he thought that Uncle Tom should amend his conduct, and perform his part of the labor. And when he found that the slave was indisposed to take hold of the work, he reproved him, again and again, and as often received surly answers in reply. In spite of all his efforts, it was with much difficulty that the overseer could keep him up with the most lazy of the squad; and, instead of dealing gently, as he studiously did, in consequence of the former good services of the slave, he used harsher language, and a more authoritative tone of voice. What influence, or what motives controlled or actuated Uncle Tom at this juncture, we will not undertake to state; but certain was it, that the more he was urged to work, the more dilatory he became; and the more he was threatened with punishment, the greater doggedness he exhibited. Until, finally, the

overseer informed him, that unless he worked with more of a will to do his part of the planting, he should report him for punishment to his master, as soon as he returned to the mansoin. The overseer felt that he should be justified in plying the lash on the spot, but he preferred, as it was Uncle Tom who was refractory, to consult his owner; and indulging the hope that, in the meantime, the slave would get rid of his laziness and surliness. Joe was directed to work with the other negroes, and Uncle Tom was left in the rear, to drop his own corn and cover it up, as slowly as his will or disposition might suggest. He, however, continued, day after day, in the same mood, and, as the overseer thought, instead of growing better, was becoming worse. Hector, in consequence, worked earlier and later, and more vigorously than ever. He expected that his master would give him the position which Uncle Tom had theretofore occupied among the slaves on the plantation, and he evinced as much desire as the overseer, to finish the planting before his master returned home.

CHAPTER III.

SOBRIETY AND MERRIMENT.

“De banjo hung in de kitchen wall,
De gals got fraid de banjo fall —
I took it down, and 'gin to play,
We kick up de debbil on a holiday.”
OLD SONG.

Mr. Erskine remained in Washington longer than he intended on the day of the dinner-party, and did not reach his home until the last of March. Mr. Pettibone found it inconvenient to accept of his invitation, and he arrived at the plantation accompanied only by his favorite servant, Pompey. He was agreeably disappointed, to hear from the overseer that the corn was planted; and, delighted with the journey, and the entertainments which he received at the capitol, he felt happy himself, and wished others to feel likewise. He passed the first few days after his return, in rehearsing to his family the various scenes which he witnessed; and so full was his mind with the many interesting incidents which occurred, that he scarcely thought of anything else. They constituted the topic of conversation at the breakfast-table, dinner-table, tea-table, and, for the most part, during the intervals of these several

periods of the day, until Pompey, who witnessed a portion, could recite them as minutely and accurately as his master.

After the lapse of a week, Mr. Erskine walked over the plantation. Its condition was perfectly satisfactory; and, pleased with the attention which the overseer had evidently bestowed upon it, during his absence, he thanked him again and again, for his care and assiduity. As the master met the slaves in the fields, he said many a kind word to them, and complimented them upon their labor. Pleased with his condescension and affability, they respected, if not loved him more than ever; and, after he walked on, chatted his praise to each other. Having informed himself of the state of the "crops," he told the overseer that he would not detain him longer from his customary duties; and, followed by Pompey, Mr. Erskine took the lane which leads to the cabins.

The cabins were the quarters of the slaves, and Mr. Erskine had taken great pains to make them comfortable. They were not remarkable for cleanliness, and yet there was an air of tidiness and gentility prevailing within—much more than might be expected by a stranger. The occupants belonged to the humblest class of society, but born and brought up there, its sorrows and pleasures, labors and amusements, became a part of their education, and they would have felt and appeared unnatural in a more elevated position. They were accustomed to this mode of life, and with their wants supplied, took no thought for the morrow, and were contented and happy.

The negresses were glad to see their master: and as he took out of the carpetbag, which Pompey lugged upon his back, some suitable present, their eyes sparkled with delight; and, as they crowded around him to receive the gifts, the little tenements resounded with their thanks and merry laughter. He passed in and out of the cabins, one after the other, complimenting the big blacks, and patting the little ones. It so happened that the last cabin he went into was the one occupied by Uncle Tom and that good old negress, Dinah. It stood out in a little bolder relief than the others, and had a wider veranda in front, and, in fact, more attention seemed to have been paid to this end of the quarters. To his surprise, Mr. Erskine found Uncle Tom lying upon the mat. He was surprised, for he had not heard that this slave was sick, and he was never known to be absent from the field when there was labor to be performed, if in health. And also, from some cause not apparent, Mr. Erskine noticed an unusual reserve in his demeanor. He, however, passed it over without comment, and taking from the boy a rich-colored piece of calico, gave it to Dinah, and bid them good morning. He repaired to the mansion, and whilst reflecting upon what occurred between himself and Mr. Pettibone, the suspicion flashed across his mind, that perhaps Pompey, who at times was wonderfully loquacious, had given Uncle Tom some crude notions of freedom. The thought made him uneasy; and the scene at the cabin, which, at another time, probably would have created no sensation, was in his mind all the afternoon. He sent

Pompey to the overseer, to say that he wished to see him immediately after supper.

Shortly after dusk, the overseer called at the mansion, and Mr. Erskine communicated to him his fears about Uncle Tom. The overseer informed him of the occurrence in the cornfield, and its effect upon the slave. He also told him of Uncle Tom's continued aversion to labor; that he had not been of much use in the spring work; and of his dislike to inflict punishment himself upon the slave, or to report him to the mansion, by reason of age and previous good services. Mr. Erskine excused the overseer, and said that he was reluctant to ply the lash, so long as there existed any reason for supposing that the slave was in ill health. The overseer was of the opinion that it was feigned; for, as he said, Dinah told him that Uncle Tom eat as heartily as ever, and slept as soundly. To make sure, the overseer was directed to send to Millwood for a physician, and if it turned out that the disease was laziness, to apply the proper antidote at once.

"And if it is spunk," added the overseer, as he rose to execute these commands, "shall I drive that out of him?"

"Without delay, sir, and let me hear no more of it," answered the master, believing that in such an event forbearance would cease to be a virtue.

After the overseer left the mansion, Mr. Erskine still continued to think of Uncle Tom; and the more he thought of him, the more suspicious he became of his disposition and intention; and then, if these suspicions should be realized, he was fearful that Uncle Tom's

disease would be contagious. "I have provided well for these creatures," he mused to himself, "cared for them as bountifully as my means admit, and think almost as much of them as if they were my own bone and sinew. If I should free them and send them adrift, they would be at a loss what to do. It would be downright cruelty. Pshaw, leave! I doubt whether they could be hired to do so. I will try on one of them. I will take Hector, as I can conjure up a plausible excuse; and if he stands fire, his example will have a good effect at the quarters, and prevent Uncle Tom from doing mischief, if he should attempt it." And he called Pompey, and directed him to go to the overseer and say that his master would be at the quarters at seven o'clock the next morning.

Mr. Erskine was punctual to his engagement, having hurried his breakfast, and taking a seat under the veranda in front of Uncle Tom's cabin, he directed the overseer to call Hector there. This proceeding was so unusual for the master, that the attention of the negroes and negresses, old and young, was excited, and all huddled around the veranda, on tiptoe to see and hear. Hector came forward reluctantly. He was not conscious of having done any wrong, unless by beating Uncle Tom in the cornfield, he had thrown him into sickness, and therefore the overseer had cast the blame of Uncle Tom's subsequent conduct upon his shoulders; and this he thought would be unmerciful.

"Hector," said his master, as he approached him under the veranda, "give me Philisee. Henceforward I shall take care of her myself."

"Sa! massa," exclaimed the negro, with an air of almost terrific amazement in his countenance.

"Yes, Hector, you are now *free*! I give you your freedom, old fellow. Here is money, too, and in Winchester you shall have a house, such as white folks use, to live in for yourself."

"No, massa, I can't, sir—I can't be free," replied the negro, shaking his head, and looking around for Philisee.

"Here I is!" she cried out, the tears trickling down her face.

"Why can't you, Hector? What do you mean? Am I not your master? Can't I make you free, and do n't I tell you that I do make you free? I see how it is! You do n't like to part with Philisee; well, take her with you. From this moment you are your own master, and she is her own mistress."

"Wha' for, massa? Wha' Hector done, you guine turn um off now?"

"Done! You have served me faithfully ever; you saved my life, old fellow, at the flood, a year ago, like a friend, and I am now your friend, and not any longer your master."

"Ki, massa! enty you always been a frien' to Hector? Enty you gib um physic when he sick, and come and see and talk wid um, and do ebbery ting he want you for do? What more you guine to do now?"

"Yes, Hector, I have done for you all this; but I have done it because you were my slave, and because I was bound to do it."

"Ah! you no want to be boun' any longer; da's it! I see. You want poor Hector for eat acorn wid de hog, and take de swamp wid de 'possum, enty?"

"Not so, old fellow! but I can not call you my slave when I would call you my friend. I shall get another slave in your place, and you shall be free."

"I dam to hell, massa, if I guine to be free!" roared the adhesive black, in a tone of unrestrainable determination. "I can't loss you' company; and who work for you like Hector? 'Tis impossible, massa, and dere 's no use to talk about it. De ting ain't right; and enty I know wha' kind of ting freedom is wid black man? Ha! you make Hector free, 'come wuss more nor poor buckrah; he tief out of de shop—he get drunk and lie in de ditch; den, if sick come, he roll, he toss in de wet grass of de stable; you come in de morning—Hector dead! and who know—he take no physic, he hab no parson—who know, I say, massa, but de debil find um 'fore any body else? No, massa, you berry good company for Hector; I tank God he so good! I no want any better."

The negro was positive, and his master, deeply affected with this evidence of his attachment, remarked to the overseer that Hector might still remain his slave, and walked away toward the mansion.

"Gosh! Jeff, dat beats my eyes all out o' my head."

"I always knowed massa sich man, Cæsar—good man. Lor' how he shid tears! I neber saw'd massa cry 'fore."

"Look dar, Jeff, how he uses his 'kerchief! I gibs um up. I tank de Lor' for sich massa. I sticks close

to dis spot, if I'd been Hector." These and similar remarks were made by the slaves, as they dispersed to their respective labors.

Mr. Erskine was satisfied with his strong hold upon the affection of the blacks, and his mind was once more contented. In a day or two, he had another interview with the overseer, in relation to Uncle Tom, and as he evinced no symptoms of reform, and it was evident, from the physician's report, that he feigned sickness, it was determined to use other antidotes than physic, and see if he could not be restored to his former state of activity and good conduct. The overseer received his orders, and proceeded to execute them.

Uncle Tom's wife was named Dinah. They had lived together as man and wife for twenty years. Both were born on the plantation, and they had several children. Dinah occupied the same position among the negresses, that her husband did among the negroes. They were both looked up to by their fellow blacks, and all along enjoyed the esteem and confidence of their master. They were also members of the church. Start not, gentle reader ! The fact was precisely as we now write it. It was the church of Christ, through whom, with the Father, even God himself, its members prayed for life eternal in the world to come. We may as well add, that they were zealous members, and for aught that appeared, sincere and constant believers in the faith. We have almost forgotten the particular denomination, but it runs in our mind that it was the Methodist Episcopal. Be this as it may, they believed in the existence of the Soul Immortal, and that its

destiny in the world to come was heaven or hell, according to the deeds done in the body. Withal, Uncle Tom was habitually affable and courteous to Dinah, whom he loved dearly. It is true, that it was his custom, and so indeed was it her's, to mix with their fellow-slaves in the pastimes and amusements incident to their humble lot. Religion with them was not worldly or theoretical, but practical—such as the heart, unburdened of the webs of sophistry, and relieved from the artifice of self-interest, would intuitively receive and express. The same might be said of some of the others, but not of all. For if so, the quarters might then have been called a *religious community*, and quite likely run into a sect, which would have landed *them* in the end—we will not undertake to say where. In short, Uncle Tom and Dinah were patterns for their fellows, both in sobriety and merriment. They were not so old as to be antiquated, nor so young as to be free and easy equals. As their cabin was *a little* the best, so were they treated with a little more consideration, in other respects, by their master. Such was their conduct and condition from year to year. With plenty “to eat and to wear,” sheltered from the storms and elements without, and “free of care,” they glided tranquilly down the stream of time, in the undisturbed enjoyment of happiness, and were contented with their lot in society.

On the evening of the day of the race in the corn-field, Dinah was as chirk as usual. Uncle Tom did not come home as soon as the work was over, and the supper-table waited for his return some time. It was

late when he entered the cabin. This did not disturb Dinah's serenity; indeed, she did not give it a thought. She was putting the children abed when he came in. After she had tucked up the clothes, and "put things to rights," she drew up her rocking chair near the corner of the fireplace, took up her knitting work, and commenced humming a familiar song. It was Uncle Tom's habit, unless he was too fatigued, to unite with her in singing, and especially *that* song. But he did not then do so. This, together with his disinclination to talk, excited her attention. She thought it strange, for she could not discover symptoms of unusual fatigue, and he did not complain of being unwell.

"Tom, wha' the matter? You hab a bad look," she said, now that she began to think of him.

"Dunno—dunno Dinah."

"You arn't guine to be sick, Tom?" asked Dinah, with more earnestness.

"Hab bad feeling, Dinah. The debbil, I'm afeerd, is in um," said Tom, and began to undress himself.

Dinah concluded he had overworked himself, and dismissed the subject. He passed a restless night, and in the morning did not act with his usual cheer. Dinah renewed her inquiries, but to no purpose. He was short in his conversation, and thoughtful. She saw there was trouble of some kind, and was anxious to acquaint herself with it. He kept his thoughts to himself, and evinced no particular haste in his movements. He loitered about the cabin, and did not get early to his work. When he came for his dinner, or returned at night, his conduct remained the same; and

so it continued from day to day, and from week to week, until Dinah really thought that "the debbil was in um."

Dinah thought it would be beneficial to Uncle Tom, if he would participate more freely in the weekly merriment of the quarters. So, a day or two before the above mentioned morning visit of the master to the cabin, as they were sitting before the fire in the evening, she thus accosted him :

"Tom, you likes to know wha' I'm tinkin' 'bout?"

"Yas."

"Does you? Den I'se tell you, wid all my heart."

"Dat 's gude, dat 's gude, Dinah."

"I'se tinkin' wha' jolly time we will hab on Saturday arternoon, down under ole elm trees, on bank ob de riber."

"Git out! I goes to no sich place, Dinah. Too much debbil in my feelings for dat."

"Wha', Tom? not go wid your own lubly Dinah to massa's pic nic! Ki, Tom, enty no more of de dance in your feelings? Drive um out dar. Hop, swash-shay, hands across, down an' up de middle! wid Jeff's fiddle to keep tune by. De Lor'! Tom, we hab reglar breakdown."

"I does n't go right now wid ole massa. Times altered; dey ar' not as used to was. Hector am de nigger, now. De overseer says he is head 'bove dis nigger. Can't stand it, Dinah! I won't—won't stand it! So dar, you hab my feelings now!" said Uncle Tom, at the top of his voice, and bringing his hand hard upon the table.

Dinah was surprised at this announcement, as it was the first intimation she had of the cause of his displeasure. And his look and gesture nearly terrified her. She loved her master for his goodness to them, and she could not bear to think unkindly of him."

"Who 'bin pouring pison in your ears 'bout massa?" she said, after having somewhat recovered from her affright.

"Dunno; ole overseer, I 'spose," he replied, unwilling to be frank.

"Massa was in cabin yesterday, first time sin' he got home from — from over de mountain. Berry glad to see his ole Dinah, and he spoke good word 'bout Uncle Tom. Massa good as eber. You hab oder feelings, now, I hopes."

"Wha' dat? Wha' dat you say! massa gude as eber?" said he, raising his voice.

"I says so," replied Dinah, in a meek tone, as if almost afraid of its effect upon Uncle Tom.

"Den, I says dat am a lie! So dar, you hab my oder feelings!" he replied in a louder voice than before.

Dinah began to cry and sob, and continued sobbing the residue of the evening. Poor woman! little did she think of the unhappy days in store for her. But Uncle Tom's stubborn will forbid sympathy, and he disdained to comfort her. He did not go to the dance. He was too proud, or too envious of Hector to do that. But the next day Dinah thought of nothing else. It was an unusual thing for Mr. Erskine to give such an entertainment; and she not only desired to enjoy the merriment, but she thought that it would displease

her master, if the slaves were not all present, as Pompey said that they must be sure to come. And when they began to leave the quarters for the river side, her heart throbbed to accompany them. Uncle Tom was at the cabin. He did not even sit under the veranda, as was his custom on a sunny afternoon, if he had no particular work to do; but remained inside, and, as it seemed to Dinah, for her especial annoyance, although she disliked to think so.

The overseer boarded the ground beneath the trees, for the party. All the negroes and negresses, old and young—save Uncle Tom and his family—were there in good season. Mr. Erskine had taken pains to furnish an extra entertainment; and with this view sent to Millwood for boxes of lemons and raisins, and also several cakes of loaf sugar, all of which arrived in good time. A sort of bar was constructed between the trunks of two large trees, where punch, and wine, and cakes were served to all. Jeff was the principal fiddler; the *fiddle*-strings were in good order, and his bow was well rosined. And no sooner had he reached the chair which had been stationed upon the boards for his special use, than he “struck up” one of his favorite tunes. The company were as ready to dance as Jeff was to draw the bow, and at once commenced, keeping time with their feet to its enlivening strains. In a few moments, Mr. Erskine made his appearance, and the slaves appeared happier than ever. Now and then Jeff would stop the music, and refresh himself at the bar, and presently the old fiddle would be more soul-inspiring than before. The dancers, too, did not

forget the good things at their elbows, and freely partook of them. So engaged, finally, did they become in the frolic, that they were not content simply with dancing, but made the grove echo with the melody of their songs. Jeff caught the contagion, and commenced singing to a familiar air—

Millwood ladies sing dis song,
Du da, du da.
Millwood race track five miles long,
Du da, du da.
Go down dar wid my hat caved in,
Du da, du da ;
Come back home wid pocket full ob tin,
Du da, du da.

And when he had sung as far as this, the whole company joined in chorus, beating time with their feet :

Guine to run all night,
Guine to run all day,
I'll bet my money on de bob-tail hoss,
Somebody bet on de bay.

Jeff, not satisfied, continued to sing—

De bob-tail horse he can't be beat,
Du da, du da ;
Runnin' around in a two-mile heat,
Du da, du da.
I win my money on de bob-tail nag,
Du da, du da ;
An' carry it home in de ole tow bag,
Du da, du da.

And the others again joined in chorus, as before, and Jeff listened. "Da's it," he said, as he stopped to rosin his bow.

“Give ’um more, ole breakdown!” exclaimed Hector.

“Yas, sar, I’s do n’t gib up so,” said Jeff, and
“struck up” again—

Dar’s fourteen horses in dis race,
Du da, du da;
I’m snug in saddle, an’ got good brace,
Du da, du da.
De sorrel horse he’s got a cough,
Du da, du da;
An’ his rider’s drunk in de ole hay loft,
Du da, du da,

and the grove again resounded with the chorus.

“Now, jist you stop dar!” shouted out Pompey, who assisted Jeff with his banjo, and was full of the glee, “an’ hear a song dat I’s guine to gib.”

Jeff complied with this request, and Pompey sung the ditty:

Dar libed on Virginny shore,
Not many years ago,
A maid who often swore,
To lub none but Pompey Snow.
For oft when dey were strolling ’long,
Her lub for him she’d tell,
An’ I will speak now in my song,
Ob cruel Lucy Bell.
Ob cruel Lucy Bell.

Oh! Lucy deceibed him quite,
An’ left him all alone;
She started one stormy night,
From her Virginny home.
Dey searched de woods for many a day,
All efforts proved in vain,—
But time now tells she ran away,
An’ Pompey’s heart was slain!
An’ Pompey’s heart was slain!

She was false to him,
But he could not think so
Lub was not wid dem,
Unhappy Pompey Snow!
An'——

“Dar, stop right dar, Pompey!” interrupted Cæsar, who had just come from the bar, and was anxious to hear Jeff’s fiddle again; “we’ll hear de balance ob your lub song some oder time. Come, Jeff, draw dat ar’ bow of yourn, and gib um glory!”

All called for Jeff, and he fiddled at the rate of ten knots an hour. The slaves caught the symphony, and shuffled at as rapid speed, and the dance terminated in a perfect rout. They cracked their jokes, sung their songs, and frolicked with merry glee, until a late hour. Mr. Erskine was happy in their enjoyment; and returning to the mansion, retired to his bed, and was lulled to sleep by the rapturous melody, as it sweetly and faintly fell upon his ears from the river-side. The stars “did lend their light for torches,” and the evening run into morning long before the slaves, contented with the night’s mirth, reached the quarters.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PUNISHMENT.

“The world is growing older,
And wiser day by day;
Everybody knows beforehand,
What you ’re going to say!
We used to laugh and frolic,
Now we must behave!
Poor old Fun is dead and buried,—
Pride dug his grave.”

“Come with me,” said the overseer to Uncle Tom, as he looked into the cabin, shortly after the slaves had gone to the dance; “I have use for you. I believe you do n’t go to the frolic this afternoon. Come, sir!”

Uncle Tom obeyed, but with reluctance. He followed the overseer, who went up the highway a short distance, and turning into a by-lane, directed his course toward the river. Dinah watched them from the veranda until they were out of her sight.

“Whar’ can de obuseer be going wid my Tom?” said she to herself. “Something wrong, something wrong! Dis accounts for Tom’s feelings. Why dar

dey go down de cow path! I'm afeerd it's for no good. De Lor' hab mercy on us!" she added, with tears in her eyes, and sitting down upon the bench wiped them away with her check apron, and feeling as if her poor heart was almost broken. Her little children rolled up the whites of their sparkling eyes in astonishment. It was an unusual sight for them to behold. Their mother crying, and that too on a Saturday afternoon! They huddled around her, and expressing their sympathy in childish prattle, tried to soothe, but with little effect.

The overseer continued on in the lane until he reached an old, tenantless log hovel, which stood near the bank of the river, and but a short distance north of the elm grove. The hovel was upon the north side of a small hill, near a brook which ran along its base, and could not be seen, either from the grove or the quarters.

"Now," said the overseer, turning around to Uncle Tom, and looking at him sharply, "go in there;" pointing to the door of the hovel; "as Mr. Erskine fitted the grove for Hector, he at the same time fitted this place for you. Perhaps in this solitary confinement you will reflect upon your conduct, and mend your ways. At any rate, you will have abundance of leisure to do so. Go in, sir," taking the slave by the arm, as he seemed to hesitate. "Go in, and I'll safely secure the door, so that you may not be disturbed in your meditations by intruders."

Uncle Tom's steps were slow, and he stopped in the doorway. He gave a deep, long sigh, and evidently

was inclined to parley ; but the overseer gave him a jog, and, closing the door against him, turned the key of a large, strong padlock, and walked quickly away.

The hovel was close, having but one aperture ; and that, in former times, had been used as a window. Mr. Erskine would not have accomplished his purpose if he had closed up this, as he did not wish the sound of merriment from the grove wholly to escape the ears of the slave. So he left it open, but took the precaution to fasten some bars of iron across it, to prevent escape. There was some straw spread upon the floor, on which the slave could repose himself, if so disposed. His imprisonment was so sudden and unexpected, that, at first, he scarcely realized his situation ; and for a few moments after he entered the hovel, he stood almost as motionless as a statue. He, however, soon felt an inclination to sit down ; and casting his eyes around, he discovered the straw. And then, for the first time, the idea flashed across his mind, that perhaps upon this he was doomed to draw his last breath. He sighed more deeply than before, and, feeling that his work on the plantation was over forever, he sunk down upon the straw. His thoughts whirled wildly in his brain, and with more of insanity than grief, he stretched his limbs upon this lonely bed. There he lay, in a drowsy stupor, for hours. At length, coming to his consciousness, he suddenly sprung up, and went to the window. The sweet strains of Jeff's fiddle and Pompey's banjo, as they were wafted by the gentle night-breeze from the grove, caught his ear, and he involuntarily stood and listened with rapture. When

at intervals the music ceased, he thought of Hector, and envious feelings would again take possession of his proud and stubborn heart. And then, vexed because he listened, he would go away from the window. The atmosphere, however, was clear, and it was difficult for his ears to escape the sound; and the high, full moon, rode the heavens in magnificent luster, and the scene without was too attractive for his eyes to confine their gaze within. These senses got the better of the others, and for the time mastered him.

But finally the night was still, and, unable to sleep, he was really left to silent reflection. And then did he remember his past joys, and how contentedly he had lived, basking in the smiles of his master, and abundantly supplied with all the necessities of life. He thought of his youth, when his master cared for him like a father; of the manly delight with which he and his lovely Dinah first took possession of the cabin, and of the many and many happy hours passed at the quarters. He recalled to his mind the labors of the plantation, and the pride with which he excelled his fellow-slaves, and his heart would again almost throb with exultation. And now, he was confined! shut up, like a cat, to pine and die! and he cursed the hour that first gave him the light. He thought, too, of Dinah, and how her mind must be distracted at his absence—of his young children, and how they must cry when his footsteps were no longer heard, and his face no more seen,—and the tears, for the first time since the contest with Hector, trickled freely down his cheeks, and cold drops of perspiration bathed his

forehead. He cursed his hard fate, and wished he was a better man.

The overseer went from the hovel to the grove, and there reported to Mr. Erskine the confinement of the slave, agreeably to his orders. Hector and the others attributed Uncle Tom's absence to his usual surliness, and thought not much of it. But the next afternoon, as they began to crawl out of the quarters, they were informed of his absence from the cabin. Dinah would not tell them the circumstances under which he left the cabin, for she was ashamed to do that; all she said was, that he had gone, and she knew not where. They began to be alarmed at his absence. Even Hector, whom he had lately treated so coldly, was anxious to know what had happened to him, and he went to the cabin at once:

"Dinah, whar' did Uncle Tom go?" he said, as he entered it.

"Dunno, Hector."

"Did he goes alone, Dinah?"

"Dunno."

"Dunno, Dinah? You not seed him go, den?"

"Yas, I seed him go, Hector," she said, beginning to cry.

"Enty you wo'nt tell Hector, den; is dat it?"

"He went down de road."

"When?"

"Yesterday arternoon."

"What time, Dinah?"

"Jist arter you all ob you went down to de river."

"An' you hab not seen um sin' dat hour? Something wrong somewhar', Dinah, depend on 't;" and he scratched his head. After a pause, he added, "Did he go up or down de road?"

"He went up to de cow-path, and turned in dar."

"Da's it," said Jeff, who stood by them, listening, "I'se knowed um all now! He 's gone to de riber an' thrown his body into de water. We shall see no more of um."

Dinah gave a shriek, and Hector declared that it was their duty to go and examine the river, and if he was drowned, recover his body. This proposition was assented to by all present, and the news immediately prevailed in the quarters that Uncle Tom had gone to the river and committed suicide.

"Jeff, you git into de skiff, and go on oder side of de riber, and look for tracks," said Hector, when they reached the bank of the river.

"I 'm 'most afeer'd to do dat!" said Jeff, with a sort of superstitious fear.

"Afeerd, d' ye say? Lor', Jeff, what you afeerd of?"

"If Uncle Tom is dead, de debbil is near um, he acts so bad to massa dis long time."

"Git out o' de way den, nigger!" said Caesar, in a tone of contempt for Jeff's cowardice, "dis nigger will go across de water stark alone. But," scratching his head, "I 'm tinkin' dat you had better go wid me, for I would want help to lift um into de skiff."

"Da's it, Caesar—da's it, nigger! I 'm guine wid you," replied Jeff, taking courage, under the belief that he should be safe from the evil one.

“Do you tink dat two ob us is enough for de debbil? What a fool you am, Jeff! De debbil is strong enough for all de niggers on massa’s plantation, if he fight wid all his might an’ strength. No debbil ober dar, or I would not be guine to hunt for dead body.”

“Das am it, Cæsar; an’ Jeff’ not afeer’d now.”

“Jist step dat foot ob your’n lightly,” remarked Cæsar, as Jeff’ was about to get into the skiff, lest he might upset it.

“Ise know’d what I’m about,” said Jeff, as he seated himself in the skiff, near the center.

“Now pull de oar, Jeff, and I steer wid dis paddle. Here we go,” and they made for the opposite shore.

When near the middle of the stream, Cæsar, either by accident or from design, changed the direction of the skiff very suddenly, and Jeff, losing his balance, careened the skiff too much upon one side, and over he went into the water. It was not the depth of the water so much, although it was quite deep in that particular spot, as this unexpected immersion, that bewildered Jeff; and, as he rose to the surface, he begged for help from Cæsar, in this his hour of need.

“Keep your wool ’bove water mark, Jeff, an’ blow yourself like a bladder, until I cotch hold ob you,” said Cæsar.

“Yas,” faintly replied Jeff, almost choking with the water, and endeavoring to spit it out of his mouth and blow it out of his wide, flat nostrils.

Cæsar, being seated in the stern, was able to keep his position, and in a moment, the skiff was upright. It was perfectly manageable, and before Jeff had

hardly made his outcry for help, it was alongside of him. But the skiff was so light, it was difficult to hoist him into the little yawl, without upsetting. Cæsar ordered Jeff to take hold of the oar, which he held out to him, and he would draw him into shallow water. Jeff obeyed, and was soon out of danger.

Hector noticed Jeff's mishap, and was more disposed to stand and laugh, than to lend a helping hand. As he wallowed up the bank, his clothes dripping with water, his appearance was truly ridiculous. Vexed at Cæsar, he cast the blame upon him, and threatened vengeance in return for the ducking. Hector beckoned to Cæsar, to come back with the skiff with the intention of crossing the river himself. Cæsar accordingly, as soon as Jeff landed on terra firma, turned the course of the skiff, and made for the opposite side of the river. Jeff, after he climbed the bank, congratulated himself upon his miraculous escape from drowning, and, like a wet dog, began to shake off the water; at the same time muttering his threats at Cæsar:

"Dar's no use of denying it," he said, supposing that Cæsar was within speaking distance, and heard every word that he uttered, "an' I'll pay um back to you. Dis nigger is not to be fooled, anyhow; dat you see," and he turned around with the expectation of receiving some reply from his companion, when, to his surprise, he discovered Cæsar paddling his skiff toward the other side of the river. The thought struck him now, more forcibly than ever, that Cæsar meant to drown him, and, failing to do so, that he had now left

him to the tender mercies of the devil. He attempted to run, and where, he did not stop to consider; but his entire body quaked so with fear, that he found his limbs lacked the power of locomotion.

"Wha' the matter wid you?" said Hector to him, as he jumped from the skiff on to the bank. "Wha' you 'bout, nigger?"

"Dun-no!" he answered, his teeth chattering so that he could scarcely articulate.

"De Lor'! if you hav'n't de ole ague fit on you! Neber mind, Jeff; soon git off."

"I 'spects-not; it is de debbil!" he said, already beginning to feel easier.

"Gosh! I sees no debbil, nigger. You got home too late last night. I felt the dew when you gib um de last dance. You are in de midst of an ague fit, ole fellar! Neber mind, we will row you up, in dat ar skiff, to the elms, and take you to de quarters; dat am nearer than the cow-path," Hector encouragingly replied, and he and Cæsar took him by the arms, and assisted him into the skiff.

It so happened, that while the slaves, just alluded to, were at the river, the overseer meanwhile was at the old hovel, having entered it about the time they turned from the highway into the lane. And it not entering into their minds, that the object of their search was in the hovel, they passed by it without observing the padlock, which, if they had noticed it, probably would have attracted their attention inside.

The overseer found Uncle Tom in a repentant mood. He had been confined there some twenty-four hours,

and the cravings of hunger reminded him very forcibly of his cabin at the quarters. He was praying, from the bottom of his heart, to be released from the imprisonment, before the overseer opened the door; and when he made his appearance, the slave was pleased to see him, and so expressed himself, both in words and actions. The overseer was also pleased at the impression which the punishment appeared to have made, and inquired if he had drove away "his feelings."

"Massa, I hab now no oder than good thoughts; the bad ones I have parted with," said Uncle Tom, in a suppliant tone, and with an imploring look.

"Can you forget the bad, and remember the good only?"

"Yas, massa, yas. I can be as good as I eber was, and me an' Dinah will lib as happy as eber in de cabin."

"Come, then," said the overseer, "and we will walk up to the quarters;" and they left the hovel, and went up the lane. Before they walked far, they heard a cry, as if for help, in the direction of the river, and stopped and listened. But the sound did not again greet their ears, and they paid no more attention to it, and passed on to the cabin. As they entered it, the overseer remarked —

"There, Dinah, I have returned with Uncle Tom. He has lost 'his feelings,' and will be a better man. A happy day to you."

It is unnecessary to relate how delighted Dinah was, by this agreeable surprise, for she had given him up

for dead. She ran out of the cabin, to give the pleasing news to her fellow-slaves, and who should she see but Hector and Cæsar returning to the quarters, carrying Jeff on their shoulders."

"Tom is in de cabin alive!" she shouted.

"Wha' dat you say, Dinah?" exclaimed Jeff, and at the same time endeavoring to raise himself.

"Tom hab jist come back with de overseer," she replied, and ran back into the cabin.

Jeff immediately showed symptoms of convalescence, and, uneasy to get a glimpse of Uncle Tom, broke loose from his companions and followed Dinah. Hector and Cæsar, believing that Dinah's sorrow was feigned, and that she had made fools of them, were not so very desirous of paying their respects to Uncle Tom, and went to their own quarter.

"Das am it," exclaimed Jeff, the moment his eyes fell upon him; and slapping him on his back added, "no ghost! you am de ole nigger himself, by golly!"

"Dat you, Jeff?"

"Yas. Uncle Tom, whar—whar hab you bin?"

"*Whar* hab *you* bin, Jeff? Why, how wet you are! You hav n't been in de river, or nothing, hab you?"

"Do n't mention it, Uncle Tom—do n't mention it," said Jeff, in a much lower tone.

"Did you *fall* into de water?"

"Dar you hab me, Uncle Tom; you coteh'd me on de hip. I must describe um to you an' Dinah," said Jeff, taking a chair for an afternoon chit-chat.

"Do, good Jeff," said Dinah.

“Well den, you know’d dis nigger, Dinah, started to find Uncle Tom’s body.”

“Yas.”

“Well den, you know’d I’s e fotched up at ole river, right at the foot of cow-path.”

“I ’spects so, Jeff,” said Dinah.

“I know’d so. Well den, Hector—dat ole nigger dat beat Uncle Tom planting corn.”

“Dare—dare—stop whar’ you am!” suddenly interrupted Uncle Tom; and at the same time laying his hand upon Jeff’s arm.

“Wha’—wha’ de matter wid um, Uncle Tom?” inquired Jeff, with amazement.

“I hab lost ‘my feelings,’ an’ I am afeer’d you call um back, if you talk ’bout Hector. Dat ’s all, Jeff,” who was satisfied with the explanation as given, and proceeded.

“Well, den Hector,”—Uncle Tom gave a shudder.

“No, not Hector,”—Uncle Tom gave a sigh.

“Cæsar, not Hector,”—Uncle Tom jumped up out of his chair, and looked toward the door. Dinah started up too, and was upon the point of imploring Jeff to stop, when he exclaimed with much earnestness, his eyes meanwhile upon Uncle Tom, “Hold your temper, Uncle Tom, I’m not guine to make short story long.”

“Blast your story, and Hector likewise! my feelings hab come back again, Jeff; an’—an’ you are de cause of all my trouble now,” said Uncle Tom, with great earnestness in his manner, and moved toward the door. Dinah again began to cry, and Jeff, feeling

that he had produced this unhappiness, and that too very unwittingly on his part, almost shed tears himself. Satisfied that Uncle Tom was alive, he thought it best to omit narrating the residue of the story, and moved toward the door, also. As they were passing through the doorway together, Jeff remarked that he was sorry that he had ruffled his mind; that he always had been his friend, and was so now.

"I know'd so — I know'd so," replied Uncle Tom in a more subdued voice.

"Sit down wid me under the veranda, and I'll told you all 'bout it," he added, and both took a seat on a bench.

"Proceed, now, proceed wid wha' you would told me," said Uncle Tom.

"Well den," said Jeff, "Cæsar ordered me to git into de skiff, and go ober de riber and find your body. Well, you know'd dat I, eber sin' I was born, was afeerd of ole debbil, an' I ax'd him go an' do likewise. He agreed to my proposition, an' was to go, when Hector said, you must go also, Jeff; an' as I thought two ob us would be too much for de ole fellar, I consented."

"Hector know'd what he was 'bout," said Uncle Tom, and put on a very knowing look.

"Wha' dat you remarked?"

"I say Hector know'd —"

"Know'd? Know'd what?" inquired Jeff.

"Dat you was to be drown'd," replied Uncle Tom, anticipating that Jeff was upset, or that himself and

the overseer would not have heard the cry for help, and Jeff's clothes would not be wet.

"Da's it, by golly! I barely escaped," answered Jeff, and pleased that Uncle Tom was sagacious enough to appreciate the design upon his life.

"Almost miraculous."

"Yas."

"And ovuseer is disappointed."

"Mistaken dare, Uncle Tom. Overseer was not wid us."

"Yas, but he had given Hector orders what to do."

"What do you know 'bout it?" asked Jeff, with surprise.

"I know'd overseer was boun' to hab my life dis day, and he meant dat you should go wid me," answered Uncle Tom.

Jeff was amazed, and thought a moment. "Whar'—whar' was you to be killed?" he then inquired.

"In de ole hovel?" said Uncle Tom, in a grave voice.

"What! in de hovel in ole cow-path?"

"Yas, I was locked in dar yesterday, to starve my life out. But overseer relented, an' let me out, when you was in de water."

"Dat am horrible, Uncle Tom, *horrible!* If massa know'd it, he would turn um off."

"Dare *you* are mistaken, Jeff. Massa know'd it, an' told overseer to do so."

"Overseer lied, if he told so! I know'd massa won't take life. He 's too good," insisted Jeff.

“Oh! you do n’t know massa as well as I do. He do n’t act without motive, dat I can tell you, from experience,” urged Uncle Tom, with the determination of gaining over Jeff to his views.

“I won’t believe it, ’till I see’d um wid my own eyes. Massa gib us a good time at de grove. I fiddled, and he danc’d wid um all. Oh! how he did dance. And he would not do dat, if he was ’bout to kill poor slave. No, no, Uncle Tom. It was punishment; da’s it.”

“You am a fool, Jeff! dat ’s what you ar’,” replied Uncle Tom, annoyed at his stubbornness.

“If I ar’ a fool, I can plant corn wid Hector,” said Jeff, angrily, and he got up from his seat and left the veranda.

Uncle Tom was disappointed in his game. Jeff was too strongly attached to his master, to believe him capable of intentionally committing a wrong; especially such a wrong as Uncle Tom attributed to him.

CHAPTER V.

THE SCHOOLMASTER.

“All lots are equal, and all states the same,
Alike in merit, though unlike in name.”

It is fashionable to regard disappointment as the source of unhappiness. Sometimes such is the fact. But the careful observer can not have failed to notice, in many instances, a contrary effect. There is such a thing as “agreeable disappointment.” The statesman in his cabinet, or the general in the field, may have anticipated defeat, and be victorious; the shipholder, amid the tempest and storm, may expect to learn that his vessel has been stranded or lost, and with the dawn of day behold it safe at anchorage; and the tiller of the soil may fear the barrenness of his labors, and yet garner a bountiful harvest. And thus what, under other circumstances, might have produced no unusual sensation, is now the source of delight.

Mr. Erskine was far happier, at Washington, when he found that the interests of the planter, in their most sensitive relations, were duly taken care of—which he did not anticipate; and he enjoyed himself much

more, after he returned home, when, contrary to his expectation, he beheld the forwardness of the plantation. And even Jeff—how very agreeably disappointed he must have been, when he alighted upon terra firma in safety; and again, when he reached the quarters, and found his friend, Uncle Tom, alive. But we can not say as much, when, under the veranda, he heard that negro malign his master. Jeff knew the malevolence which he entertained toward the overseer, for he exhibited it in his ill conduct, and the cause was obvious. But, why he should allow his hatred or enmity to extend to the master, and especially what reason could exist for supposing him desirous of taking their lives, was beyond his comprehension. Perhaps the kind treatment of his master, and the jovial entertainment of the day previous, may have prejudiced Jeff in his favor. However that may be, Uncle Tom was not successful in the effort to estrange his feelings. He was disappointed, and in more misery than ever. But his lot was cast; and however unpleasant to the mind, to drudge and toil without gaining an inheritance for himself, yet he was not prepared to say, in the language of the poet,

“These arms

Invite the chain, the naked breast the steel;”

and therefore, he resumed the accustomed labors of the plantation with more alacrity and apparent good will.

We do not propose to detail the various daily incidents, as they occurred from week to week, on the

plantation, except so far as they appertain to our narrative. And if we succeed in this, we shall have accomplished our undertaking.

Some weeks after the occurrences above mentioned, Mr. Erskine was reposing himself in the piazza of his mansion, and enjoying the luxury of an afternoon *siesta*. On awakening from his slumber, he noticed a gentleman coming up the lawn; and as he discovered him to be a stranger, he at once rose to receive him, with the politeness peculiar to the well-bred Virginian.

The stranger appeared to be a man of five and thirty years of age, well dressed, and easy deportment. As he had a prepossessing appearance, Mr. Erskine was glad to have him as a guest, and throwing off all restraint, entered without farther ceremony into familiar conversation. After the usual preliminary civilities, he took the liberty of inquiring the name of his visitor.

"Mr. Bates, sir."

"From Winchester?"

"I sojourned there for a few days only."

"Ah! traveling at pleasure, to view the country, I presume."

"Not exclusively, sir," replied the stranger, in a tone which awakened the curiosity of Mr. Erskine.

"Business and pleasure combined, I take it, then," quickly remarked Mr. Erskine."

"Why, yes sir. I heard of your country-seat, and much of the valley of the Shenandoah," was the evasive answer.

"We old residents think there is no place like ours," said Mr. Erskine, in a voice that indicated no particular desire on his part to continue the acquaintance, and deliberately seated himself, coolly inviting the stranger to do the same.

"You have a delightful climate here, sir," said Mr. Bates, resuming the conversation.

"Charming — charming, sir."

"Your lands are fertile, I suspect?"

"Bountiful yields, and easy of cultivation."

"The whites, I suppose, could not compete with your blacks in plantation work," said Mr. Bates, with the view of flattering Mr. Erskine, so as to remove the coldness which he exhibited, perhaps from a suspicion of his motives.

"Oh! no sir. Our sun is too hot for the American to labor in the field. Besides, it would be degrading—degrading, sir."

"Labor, with us at the North, is not regarded as menial."

"At the North, sir!" replied Mr. Erskine, with a look of surprise; "are you from the North?"

"Formerly."

"And, pray, from what part of the North, and how long since?"

"I am from the land of steady habits, *not* long since. I was educated at New Haven," he replied, with as pleasing an air as he could give himself.

"And you are looking for some place, with us at the South, to make your home, perhaps professionally?"

“Since my graduation at college, I have devoted my attention, principally, to the duties of some academy. And, tired of teaching a mixed multitude of pupils, I have withdrawn from the Winchester school, and propose to recreate my faculties in giving instruction in some private family, where the service will be mutually advantageous.”

“Ah! a commendable calling, sir,” said Mr. Erskine, beginning to regard Mr. Bates with more complacency. “Our schools in this region, likely, are not as common as with you at the North, although we take pains to educate our children in the rudiments of the language, and then frequently send them away to the academies you mention.”

“It is a question with me, whether private instruction is not the most useful and the best. Too much folly is sometimes prevalent at the public school, and too much roguery acquired for the good of the pupil in after life.”

These sentiments accorded so well with those entertained by Mr. Erskine, that he began to consider Mr. Bates a man of sense as well as education, and with much suavity of manner remarked, “I perceive, Mr. Bates, you have a horse standing in the road. If agreeable, I will be happy to have you tarry with me, at least until to-morrow; and so I will send Pompey to take care of your beast.”

Mr. Bates accepted this polite invitation, of course, without hesitancy, as he was desirous of becoming tutor to the family of his host; and as he did not dine at Millwood, Mr. Erskine ordered Lucinda, an old

kitchen servant, to serve the guest with a cold collation. The repast over, the stranger took a stroll over the plantation with its proprietor, and was pleased with the attention paid to him. All things considered—the neatness of the buildings, the fertility of the soil, as indicated by the large, wavy blades of grass and corn, as they undulated in the gentle breeze which fanned the valley, and the magnificent scenery of hill and woodland that lay in the distance—Mr. Bates considered this country-seat as *little* superior to any his eyes ever beheld. And he made up his mind to effect an engagement, if possible, extending into the succeeding year.

The next morning, after breakfast, he opened his budget to Mr. Erskine in good earnest. He had been at much pains to impress the planter with the idea that he was not only a man of accomplishment and erudition, but had an abundance of experience in school-teaching. And his efforts were not ineffectual in at least obtaining the friendly opinion and regard of the planter in his favor, as a gentleman, if not as a man of learning. Accordingly, in the morning he produced for the perusal of the planter, sundry letters of introduction, highly complimentary in terms, and some of them bearing a very old date. As the names of the writers were not familiar to the planter, with the exception of one from a gentleman at Winchester, they were not as influential as desired. Determined not to be disappointed in his application, Mr. Bates handed to Mr. Erskine a long and wide-folded paper, somewhat soiled from wear, and smilingly remarked,

“That he had carried that document for many a year, and considered its price above value.”

“Ah! what have you here? It has the broad seal of the state attached! Ah! you have held some high position in the state, I presume,” said Mr. Erskine, and proceeded to unfold it.

“Be pleased to peruse the document, sir.” And the planter *was* pleased to do so, but found his attempts unavailing, for the language, as it seemed to him, was everything but English. After examining it attentively for a moment, he exclaimed, with some vexation at his ignorance,

“Sir, you are too much for me. I have never been beyond my own tongue. This is absolutely heathen, or I am no judge.”

“Oh! sir, it is written in what we call the dead languages,” replied Mr. Bates, in a very bland tone.

“Ah! the dead languages! Ah! yes, I have heard of them; but this is the first sight I have had of them. Pray excuse me; I am afraid I should detain you too long, if I undertake to peruse the document,” said Mr. Erskine, handing back the document.

“You certainly have heard of the dead languages?” said Mr. Bates, uncertain whether he was feigning ignorance; “You must have, before this, in your younger days, certainly have seen the dead languages.”

“Oh! I am acquainted with the Latin; I have occasionally seen words said to be in that tongue, and I believe I have seen what you learned men call the Greek, but nothing like this. I think there must be some mistake.”

"Ah! I perceive the difficulty. This document is in the Hebrew partly, and partly, if you will look at it again, in the Latin. It is a diploma received at one of our theological seminaries at the North."

Mr. Erskine took it again, and upon further examination, discovered some words composed of English letters.

"And here, sir, is another parchment, if you will examine it, conferring the degree of Master of Arts," said Mr. Bates, offering to give it to Mr. Erskine; "this, sir, is all Latin."

"Oh! I am perfectly satisfied, Mr. Bates, that you are a man of sufficient knowledge to teach my children. I will dismiss any further examination on that head," said Mr. Erskine, and delivered the Hebrew diploma back to him.

"Then as to the terms of my hire," added the school master.

"Ah! yes, I had forgotten that subject. Propose your price and time."

"I suppose four hundred dollars, and one year, would be acceptable."

"I think your instruction may be worth that; but, stop; it is not simply my own children, but I wish some attention to be paid at the quarters. To tell you the truth, I have been thinking for some time of giving my blacks some of the rudiments of education."

The schoolmaster expressed his surprise.

"Oh! but if you will only consider the point, Mr. Bates. It has occurred to me, that their service would be more valuable to me. And they are apt to learn.

They have brains, and I am as much entitled to use them as I have the body. At the same time, it would be doing them a kindness. What think *you* of this proposition?"

"Favorably, sir—favorably," replied Mr. Bates, although he did not relish the idea of undertaking the job of instruction himself.

"Well, sir, your terms, with this service included, will be satisfactory."

"I think," rejoined the schoolmaster, "upon reflection, that I must vary the price, as, with two schools on my hands, I shall not have much time for recreation or repose."

"You can name your own hours for school, and take your own holidays," remarked Mr. Erskine.

"Am I to understand that instruction is to be given to the old as well as the young?"

"Simply the young. The old ones *are* too old to learn much, I presume. They know something, I believe, now. But it is difficult to learn an old African anything but labor and fun, and mine are adepts in that learning, now," replied Mr. Erskine, laughingly.

"I will say five—well, I will take six hundred and close the arrangement at that."

"Agreed," quickly answered Mr. Erskine, fearful that the longer he delayed, the higher would be the price. Mr. Bates again expressed his acquiescence, and the services of the schoolmaster were engaged.

It was necessary for Mr. Bates to return to Winchester, for his books and clothes, before he entered upon his duties. And it was arranged that Pompey

should accompany him, but as it was near noon, the journey was postponed until the next day. In the meantime, Mr. Erskine was attentive to the school-master, treating him as a guest. After dinner, he proposed that they go to the river and fish, for amusement. The proposition was agreeable, and with angle and line, they proceeded up the bank of the river some distance. Pickerel, or as there called "pike," was the kind of fish which they caught, although occasionally a bullhead came up with the hook. They angled until the sun had descended behind the Alleghanies; and so great had been their success, that the load was inconvenient for Pompey to carry.

"Massa, shall I take um all home," said he, "or dump um in the water, to fish um next time.

"Never mind, Pompey. One stick will be enough," said his master, and he proceeded to unloose them, one by one, and drop them into the river.

The question and answer attracted the notice of Jeff, who was in the lane, not far off, driving up the cows to the milk-yard. He could see the master, but not the slave, and so he climbed the fence, and on the top-most rail, singing

"Sittin' on a rail,
Sittin' on a rail,"

he stretched his eyes hard, to get a glimpse. As he expected, it was Pompey, who seemed to be dropping something into the river, but what, was indistinct to his vision.

"Pompey—Pompey! Lor' de massa! wha' you

'bout dar?" he shouted. Pompey did not pay him any attention, but soon riddled the *pike* from the stick, and started for the mansion.

Jeff saw the stranger, and was curious to know who he was. And as Pompey paid no attention to his outcry, he jumped from the fence, and running down the lane, reached the foot of it just as Pompey came along.

"Wha' the matter, Pompey, dat you no longer discourse with dis nigger? I hollars to you, an' you 'd pay no heed; I 'speets you am gittin' 'bove your legs," said Jeff, as if quite angry.

"Wha' dat you say!" exclaimed Pompey, rolling up the white of his right eye, as if it meant something. "I'm 'bove you," shaking his head, "I is no company for such niggers."

"Ki, Pompey, enty you guine to be nigger no more?"

"I'se no nigger to you. Go an' drive your cows, and ax no more questions," said Pompey, and walked on.

"Well, den, I 'speets de next ting will be Pompey wid de ivory cane, and massa wid de banjo," said Jeff, and was upon the point of turning back, when he recollected his errand there.

"I say, Pompey, who is dat new comer dar wid massa?" Pompey paid no attention to Jeff's question. He reiterated the question, and again received no reply. Vexed at this incivility, he muttered, as he turned upon his heels, "Well, go an' be white man; I'll be nigger still. His complexion changes; dis ole nigger's do n't. Dar, put dat in your chaw-tobaccy, an' keep um dar."

Lucinda broiled a dish of pickerel for supper, and Mr. Bates declared that its flavor surpassed any that he ever eat. Mr. Erskine waived tea, and substituted cogniac. Fond of hearing stories, he was equally fond of telling them; and he delighted his guest with the account of many exploits in fishing and gaming, to a late hour. The schoolmaster concluded that he had made an engagement which it would be pleasant to fulfill.

CHAPTER VI.

FAMILY OF THE PLANTER.

All people went
Upon their ten toes in wild wonderment,
BISHOP HALL.

Pompey was dressed and astir at an early hour the next morning, for the jaunt to Winchester was his last thought before he fell asleep. Several years had passed since he enjoyed the pleasure of a visit there; and, although, as well may be supposed by the reader, he had not been much of a traveler in his day, yet, the trip to Washington "whetted his appetite" for sight-seeing, if we may adopt an homely phrase, and he anticipated much amusement. He gave express directions to his wife Lucinda, the night previous, not to oversleep herself, and on no account to omit waking him the moment she opened her eyes. The precaution turned out to be unnecessary, for "she did not sleep a wink," so great was her desire for Pompey to go. He was as fond of *story telling* as his master: and he had, for the last six weeks, entertained his *cara sposa* by

the hour, with the many incidents which occurred in his last journey ; insomuch that some had been twice and thrice told, and were becoming somewhat uninteresting to listen to. It is not to be inferred, however, that Lucinda liked to hear Pompey any the less for that : her ears were never known to be closed when his voice knocked for admittance. Yet she thought he would have something new to relate on his return, and this of itself, aside from any enjoyment which the ride might afford to him, was a sufficient inducement to comply with his earnestly expressed wish. She was expeditious in her movements, and the breakfast being served earlier than usual, Mr. Bates and Pompey were on the road with their faces to the north, in good time. As Mr. Bates preferred it, he returned on horseback, and Pompey had his vehicle all to himself. At first, Mr. Bates rode ahead ; but Pompey was so much interested with what he saw along the highway, that he insensibly loitered — at least this is the most charitable view to take — and Mr. Bates waiving precedence, which was just as agreeable to Pompey, dropped behind, and by occasional promptings to his companion, hastened the speed of the vehicle, and ever and anon entered into conversation with its sable driver. We will not follow them, but will go back with the reader to the mansion.

Our narrative has not as yet disclosed the number of Mr. Erskine's family, nor their relations to each other. It may as well be stated now, as at any other time, that Mrs. Erskine departed this life several years before the time of which we write ; and such was the

respect and love of the husband for the memory of the dead, that he remained a widower. She left three children to mourn her loss — two sons and a daughter, who was the eldest of the three, being in her eighteenth year. Of a gentle disposition, and easy, quiet manners, the daughter found admirers in all her acquaintances. Her accomplishments were not so very extraordinary as to dazzle or bewilder the imagination, but her breeding was that of a lady, in its ordinary signification; and the amenity of her mind united to the goodness of a heart overflowing with the milk of human kindness, attracted the notice, and won the admiration of all whom chance threw in her pathway. For the last few years, she had been absent from the plantation in attendance upon the schools, and had now returned to her home, to delight her father and enliven his hospitality. The two brothers contributed their efforts to make life agreeable; one of whom was her junior some three years, and the other under the age of ten. It was for the purpose of imparting instruction to these boys, that Mr. Erskine employed, in part, the services of the schoolmaster.

Not inured to heavy labor, nor to any steady labor, as is the custom in other climes with youth similarly situated, their leisure for amusement was unlimited; and the greater was the necessity, therefore, to employ their minds in acquiring information that might be useful in after life. The return of their sister from the ladies seminary, gave a new feature to the family circle at the mansion, and dispelled the monotony that had prevailed there for a long time. She reached

home only a short time prior to the visit of Mr. Bates, and her brothers had not yet exhausted their constantly recurring schemes of diversion and pleasure. Mr. Erskine was delighted with their pastimes, and readily concurred in whatever was proposed.

The day that Pompey accompanied the schoolmaster to Winchester, they had planned an excursion among the hills of the Blue Ridge, as well for sport as to refresh themselves from the oppressively hot weather; and as Pompey was necessarily engaged elsewhere, they took Jeff and his fiddle in place of him. Like many gentlemen at the South, Mr. Erskine possessed a fine stud, and among them was a well-trained but gay pacer, which he determined to keep for the special use of Mary, his daughter. This was the first time she had the pleasure of mounting the pony. Accustomed, however, to ride on horseback, she easily managed him, and made a graceful appearance. Mr. Erskine joined his children in the excursion, and away they rode over the meadow and across the river, and soon were among the hills. Jeff had a long spur, tied to the heel of his right foot, for it was too warm to wear shoes, and with the aid of its propelling power, he was enabled to keep his old gray mare within hailing distance of the party. After awhile, the party turned into a narrow by-path, hardly passable, in consequence of the low limbs of the trees that skirted the path on each side. Besides, it was winding, and Jeff soon lost sight of his master and the children. The old mare was unaccustomed to the speed with which she had been forced to travel thus far, and becoming

jaded, by this over-exertion, quicker than usual, she availed herself of these impediments in the path to slacken her gait. This, together with the boughs against which his head was constantly thumping, was too much for the equanimity of Jeff's temperament, and he began to rail at his beast, and curse Pompey for getting him into so bad a scrape. The party rode on until they reached an opening in the forest near the head-springs of some tiny rivulet, which increases in volume as it flows toward the valley below, until it assumes the form of a creek, long before it unites with the waters of the Shenandoah. They halted and dismounted, expecting Jeff would presently beave in sight. He did not make his appearance, and fearful that some accident might have befallen him, Mr. Erskine requested Frederick, his eldest son, to return and ascertain the cause of the delay.

After returning some distance—and it seemed longer than before—he all at once heard music, like that of the violin, as it echoed in the woods. He could not believe it came from Jeff's fiddle, for then he must be loitering, which he would hardly presume to do. But as the strain evidently came from some point ahead, and in the vicinity of the path, Frederick went forward; and the music became more and more distinct, until he heard Jeff's voice keeping time to a favorite tune, with the words—

“Good bye, old Peter Story,
Stone dead, an' gone to glory,
Look out I's dar before you,”

"Why, Jeff, this will never do," said Frederick as he rode down the path. The old mare was browsing, and Jeff was sitting on a rock hard by, amusing himself, sure enough, with his old fiddle. We took you to amuse us and not yourself, you black scamp. What do you stop here, for?"

"Dar, rail away, massa Fredy, rail away. Neber ask for cause!" replied Jeff looking up, without being in the least disturbed, and sawing away at his fiddle.

"Come, come, sir: you will be punished for this. You had better sling up that fiddle of yours, and start on the mare in less than no time, if you mean to get out with a whole skin," rejoined Frederick.

"Now, massa Fredy, do n't be in sich a hurry. Plenty of time, an' Pompey is not half way to Winchester."

"I should like to know what Pompey has to do with this laziness of yours. Come, come — move yourself from the rock, and mount the mare."

"Now, massa Fredy, jist you hold up, and I will 'splain de cause to you. Neber go off 'fore you're loaded," said Jeff with perfect composure, and retaining his seat. Frederick saw it was of no use to hurry the slave, and believing that if he allowed Jeff to take his own way, it would be the shortest, replied, "Well, explain the trouble," and dropped the reins of the bridle upon the neck of his horse.

"Well, den, massa Fredy, you must know, we come with a terrible gallop, an' the old mare was bery tired before we got to dis path. Den dis path was so snaky

dat it was difficult to see great ways, an' she lost track ob de oder hosses ; an' she concluded dat they had bid good bye to her."

"You should have put spur to her."

"Sa!"

"You should have spurred her right lustily."

"An' if I did 'nt, massa Fredy, den call dis nigger a lazy coot. Look at her side, it bleeds now."

Frederick cast his eye toward the mare, and the right side of her belly did look as though Jeff had labored hard to spur her forward.

"Well, Jeff, I reckon that she is now rested. Supposing that you give her another trial. The music has refreshed you, I presume."

"Why, massa Fredy, you ax'd me to take pleasure jaunt wid you. I'm contented whar I am; and I 'spects, from de way de ole mare whisks her tail, dat she is too," replied Jeff, disinclined to change his position.

"You must make another effort, and speedily; or else you may expect the overseer to wait upon you this evening."

"I always do as I agreed, massa Fredy. An' I agreed to take pleasure trip wid you, an' if dis far is 'nuff for me, why do you want me to go farder. If I do n't look out, I shall go so far dat I neber shall want to take anoder: an' 'specially, I shall not be able, if I keeps bumping dis head aginst de ole limbs. Its enymost a jelly now."

"Then I shall return to the opening, and inform my father that you decline to do as he bids you, shall I?"



said Frederick, and turning the head of his horse to start up the path.

"Hold your hoss!" exclaimed Jeff.

"Well, sir, say on."

"Jist tell massa dat I do n't like my eggs over fresh."

"Do n't like eggs *over fresh*! Pray, what has that to do with your obstinacy?" replied Frederick, at a loss to understand what Jeff was driving at.

"Why, it is the butt of a story I am guine to tell you, if you was not in sich an unconscionable hurry."

"Oh! get out with your miserable nonsense," answered Frederick, vexed at the slave's incivility.

"Well den, jist as you say, massa Fredy, 'bout dat. But if you 'll hold your hoss, I will told you de hull of dat story."

"Very good, Jeff. Talk fast, and I will hear it."

"Well den, massa Fredy, you must know, once upon a time, a mass'r thought a good deal of his servant, an' he invited him to breakfast wid him."

"What a lie!"

"Dat 's true, massa Fredy, but do n't trouble my story. An' when mass'r an' servant set down to de table, mass'r was bery perlite, an' he ask'd de servant to help himself to a boil'd egg. Sambo took a look in de dish, an' he helped himself. As he was 'bout to break it, mass'r look'd at um, an' said it was not good; it made no difference, an' Sambo broke um, and was eating, when mass'r said, 'Bah! Sambo, do n't eat dat; flavor is bad — bah! it stinks!' an' offer'd de servant anoder. Sambo declined. 'Wha' dat?' said mass'r.

‘I do n’t care ’bout my eggs being over fresh!’ replied Sambo, and continued to eat.”

“What a dirty pig!” remarked Frederick.

“You do n’t see de point, massa Fredy? Mass’r thought dat Sambo was economical, and would save lost penny, an’ he made Sambo his overseer; jist wha’ he wanted when he eat mass’r’s egg.”

“Fool! do you suppose that your mass’r will make you overseer, Jeff?”

“No, no, massa Fredy; but perhaps he will be satisfied if I do n’t wish to take a longer trip of pleasure dis time;” and Frederick, disgusted with Jeff’s folly, rode up the path, leaving him and the old mare where he found them. He came up with the party a short distance beyond the opening, and communicated to his father the reason of Jeff’s delay. They ascended the hills until they reached the summit of one higher than the others; and there they paused to view the hills and the valleys below. Away in the distance could be seen, with the naked eye, Millwood — “the loveliest village of the plain” — and still farther on, with the aid of her father’s spy-glass, Mary could plainly discern the steeples of Winchester glittering in an effulgent sun. She was enraptured with the expanding prospect; and, dismounting from her pony, she took a seat in the shade of a large tree which stood upon the very peak of the summit.

In a few moments, Frederick came running up to her, and saying, “Look again through the glass, and your eyes shall fall upon Mr. Bates and Pompey.”

Mary did as requested, and distinctly saw them a few miles beyond Millwood, moving rapidly down the road.

"It is really them, Frederick. Pompey seems to be enjoying a hearty laugh," she exclaimed, delighted with the view. "I could sit here for hours and hours, and not tire of the prospect," she added.

"How would you like to live here, Mary?" asked Frederick, jestingly.

"I should admire it, I have no doubt, as a residence."

"The lightning would be sure to hit here," said her younger brother, who had joined them.

"And when you became satiated with the prospect, how solitary would it be up here among the clouds," added her father.

"Perhaps so; but methinks that time would never occur. New scenes would constantly be moving before my eyes, with new objects for admiration."

"Your blood is fresh now, Mary; and your views and ideas are fresh also. But they would soon wear off, and you would wish yourself lower down in the world," rejoined her father, and Mary bowed assent.

The party gazed with silent wonder; and Mary, fresh from the groves of the academy, gave a wide range to her thoughts; and her young imagination, bounding away from the dull realities of reason, soared afar in the realm of elysium. She heaved a sigh, and a packet dropped from her bosom. Frederick picked it up, and was in the act of handing it to his sister,

when, observing the caption, truant-like he opened the queer-folded parcel, and began to peruse it. Mary did not notice the accident.

“What have you there?” said the younger brother to Frederick, looking over his shoulder.

“For all the world, a love-letter!”

“A love-letter!” exclaimed Mr. Erskine, with some surprise. “Well,” he added, after a minute’s pause, “my Mary is in the heyday of youth; I don’t know that this is wonderful. But, Frederick, you are ungallant, my son, to read your sister’s letters, and above all, her love-notes.”

Frederick felt the force of his father’s remarks, and quickly folded the packet, to return the same to his sister.

“Never mind,” she said, now noticing, for the first time, what had happened, “read it aloud: it is not all *sentimentalism*,” and Frederick again opened it, and read nearly as follows:

Come, lady-love, the flowing tide
Returns to bear our bark away;
Come, let us o’er its bosom glide,
And through yon fertile woodland stray.

The stars beam from their vaulted dome,
And glitter in the glassy wave;
The wandering night-bird leaves her home,
And seeks the pebbled shore to lave.

The mountain-breeze, from off the height,
Surcharged with fragrance rich and free,
Wafts ambient through the silent night,
And spreads an incense o’er the sea.

The moon-lit spire gleams in the air,
The green-topped pine ascends in pride.
The arching cypress clusters there,
And sweetly flows the evening tide.

Come, dearest, to the pearly strand,
Our bark's impatient to be gone ;
Come, let us to yon fairy land,
And sport upon its dewy lawn.

We 'll wander through its spicy grove,
Where grapes in clusters strew the ground ;
Where, through the parting trees above,
The hallowed moonbeams play around.

Yes ! where the wild-flowers thickly spread
Their blushing petals to the gaze,
There we will haste with lightsome tread,
And follow through each winding maze.

Will watch the glorious orb of night,
That upward mounts the spacious sky
The twinkling stars that shed their light,
And shine refulgent from on high.

And when we see them each depart,
Amid the hills that crown the west,
I 'll clasp thee, dearest, to my heart,
And one fond kiss shall seal our rest.

Come, lady-love, the swelling gale
Floats onward with that rising star ;
Come, let us up yon distant vale,
And o'er the bright blue lake afar.

“Elegant, elegantly done !” exclaimed Mr. Erskine, clapping his hands with approbation, “but rather lengthy.”

"The more so, the better, with us girls, dear father."

"It is very well, Mary. If you get no worse nonsense than that, you will be fortunate."

"Nonsense! how can you call it by that name, dear father?" replied the daughter, blushing, and vexed at this harsh criticism.

"Oh! never mind, Mary," said Frederick, coming to her relief, "father's days of love ditties are over."

"Yes," said Mary.

"And let me add, Mary," observed her father, "that the older you become, the more will you find that there is a limit to all human felicity; that all pleasures are like poppies, we seize the flower, and find its bloom is fled."

"Or like the snow-falls on the Shenandoah,
A moment they are white, then gone forever,"

Mary replied.

"Ah! yes, sensible, very sensible," said Mr. Erskine, and intimated to his children the propriety of turning their faces homeward.

This suggestion was adopted, and remounting the horses, the party sauntered down the mountain, amusing themselves with the many little incidents and wild scenes that fell upon their observation.

"We must hasten our speed," said Mr. Erskine, as they again reached the opening by the springs, "or we may be caught in the storm which is evidently gathering in the southwest."

"That would be delightful," said Mary, "for I have never been in the forest in a thunderstorm; let it

come!" and she tapped her pony with the riding whip, and rode on with a more rapid pace.

Mr. Erskine soon espied the gray mare ahead, near the path, and drawing the reins of the bridle tighter, galloped his horse forward, to arouse Jeff, so that there might be no unnecessary delay.

"Ki, massa, I's jist guine to get up the ole mare, as I hearn you coming," said the black, rubbing his eyes.

"Have you been asleep all this while, you black dog?" inquired his master.

"Only jist taken a nap, massa!"

"A nap! why, you scamp, it is now in the middle of the afternoon. Come, hurry! Make amends now, by your haste, or we will leave you to the wolf and panther."

Jeff did not relish this idea, and jerked his beast into the path.

"Into the stirrups quick, you black rascal, and keep your distance, dead or alive."

Jeff began to tremble, for by this time the party had passed by him, and were out of his sight, although he still heard the rustling of the dead leaves, as the hoofs of the horses scattered them from the path. He coaxed the old mare to quicken her trot, and at the same time roweled her with the spur. All of a sudden, "it grew dark," and he thought it was nearer night than his master pretended the hour to be. If he should be caught in that wood, now fast becoming dismal to him, after nightfall, what *would* become of him! he thought to himself, and he plied the spur quicker

and harder than before. The old mare was disposed to demur to this treatment, and commenced kicking up her hind legs; so much so, that it was with great difficulty that Jeff' could retain his seat in the saddle.

"Wha' de matter wid you, you ole critter? git out of your tracks, or I'll murder you alive! so git up," he said, giving her belly another punch with the spur. The beast shook her head, and stopped her gait, began to kick faster and wider of the mark than ever.

"It's all day wid dis nigger! gosh dam de lazy critter!" exclaimed Jeff, in despair, and dismounted, with the intention of leading her with the bridle. He hardly touched the ground, before a sharp streak of lightning flashed in his face, fairly dazzling his eyes with its intense brightness, succeeded, as quick as thought, by a terrific peal of thunder. Jeff's teeth chattered, and his knees knocked together, worse than when he was hunting for Uncle Tom's body. Large drops of water began to fall from the cloud, which appeared almost to rest upon the tops of the trees, and the rain soon came down in torrents. The lightning continued to flash, and the thunder as often crackled, terminating in a loud, heavy roar, which made the earth itself tremble. Jeff's religious views were called into requisition, and he prayed for forgiveness, and begged for mercy, from the unseen God who controlled the elements.

Mr. Erskine and his children reached the valley before the shower overtook them, and "reined up" under a shed which fortunately was near, when the cloud commenced flooding the ground with its water.

"In good time! we have just saved our distance. We will take our chances here," said he.

"The tall trees on the mountain will divert the lightning from us," said Frederick.

"Ah! yes; but who knows what will be the fate of Jeff and the poor old mare!" replied Mary, in the goodness of her heart.

"Good enough for him," said Frederick. "It will cure him of his laziness and foolery."

"I should dislike to lose him," remarked the master. "He is valuable on the plantation, if he is *not* as good a house-servant as Pompey."

There was a high craggy ledge extending along the brow of the nearest hill, and from some cause unknown to Mr. Erskine, it was very attractive to the lightning. For several successive minutes, it was as often tearing up the ground; and this constant flash, as well as their proximity to it, alarmed the party, and they availed themselves of the first gleam of sunshine to leave their uncomfortable position; and after fording the river, they rode directly across the open field to the highway, and presently alighted at the mansion, pleased with the excursion, although drenched with the shower.

After the storm subsided, the overseer directed Hector to go in search of Jeff, who was found, as he was emerging from the woods on foot, leading his mare with perfect composure.

CHAPTER VII.

SCHOOL KEEPING.

“Still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.”

In the course of two or three days, Mr. Bates arrived from Winchester with “bag and baggage,” and immediately commenced his arrangements for *school keeping*. Frederick and his brother were to receive the attention of the schoolmaster at the mansion, and such of the blacks, at the quarters, as Mr. Erskine might designate.

The idea of teaching negroes — especially slaves — was new to Mr. Bates. But he had revolved it over in his mind, since the subject was broached, and concluded to let this unexpected turn in his destiny take its course. He walked over to the quarters with Mr. Erskine, and was received with marked attention. The buildings, maugre their homely construction, looked more comfortable than he anticipated, and the apartments were more cleanly. The planter gave notice, in his presence, to the heads of the several families, that

all the boys between the ages of five and fifteen years, must make their appearance on Monday morning following, at nine o'clock, at the hovel in the lane, for the purpose of being taught the rudiments of education; and remarking at the same time, that Mr. Bates was the schoolmaster, and the hovel the only convenient place he had for a schoolroom. This piece of intelligence created quite a buzz among the inmates of the quarters, and the subject was talked about by both old and young; and all wondered who this Mr. Bates *could* be. The idea of going to school, and that too in the old hovel, was as novel to them, as that of teaching slaves was to the instructor.

Mr. Bates thought that it was more than he "bargained for," and began to have some misgivings as to its propriety. Besides, he disliked the idea of being confined in so small an apartment, in such hot weather, with so many negroes. In addition to its unpleasantness, the atmosphere there engendered might affect his health. In fine, he was fearful that he might contract some disease of a chronic type, that perhaps might remain in his system for the residue of life. His mind was uneasy, and he wished himself released from this part of the engagement. He did not desire, however, to acknowledge this wish to Mr. Erskine. Such an acknowledgment might run counter to his ulterior designs; and what those were, we will not now undertake to define. The next day, they were sitting in company on the piazza; and Mr. Erskine, who had, in earnest, entered upon the design of giving his young negroes the benefits of an ordinary education, was inquiring of —

his schoolmaster what books it was desirable to buy at Millwood, for their use, as he proposed to make the purchase on the following day.

"I will make a memorandum, sir," replied the schoolmaster; and, after a moment's pause, added, with some hesitation, "you have well weighed in your mind the feasibility of your plan of education. I presume?"

"Perfectly, Mr. Bates."

"And the propriety?"

"Of that, I have *no* doubt."

"Can you inform me, Mr. Erskine, why it is that the education of the slave has not been a part of your system, here at the South?" modestly inquired the schoolmaster.

"Custom, I suppose, sir."

"But there must have been a commencement to this *custom*! And there must have been a reason, I think."

"Ah! yes, Mr. Bates. Well, if I were to assign a reason, I should say that it was more the *poverty* of the owner than his *unwillingness*."

"Why, how is that? I do not appreciate it."

"I am not much read in our early history, sir; but it has come *traditionally*, if you please, to me, that our ancestors were not overstocked with this world's goods; and as it was necessary to buy the black, to till the fields, they could not afford to spare his time."

"And he could learn *to work* without the aid of academical instruction?"

"Exactly, sir."

“And then, his soul—what was to become of that, under the old system?”

“Ah! sir, that ’s the point, sure enough,” remarked Mr. Erskine, and paused for reflection.

“It was, doubtless, easy enough to learn them how to live, and how to work, but more difficult to learn them how to die!”

“Ah! I recollect, my father was accustomed to say that he had discharged his duty, both to the slaves and the Creator, by learning them how to die *honestly!*”

The answer of the schoolmaster, to this remark, was not ready, and *he* paused for reflection.

“To accomplish this,” continued Mr. Erskine, “they were taught to be honest to each other, to be honest to their master, to be honest to themselves; and then they surely would be honest to their God.”

“And thus be honest in life, and honest in death!”

“Exactly, Mr. Bates.”

“It has occurred to me, Mr. Erskine,” said the schoolmaster, very blandly, “that, in the benevolence of your heart, you have overlooked one point.”

“Pray, what is that?”

“If you give them too much knowledge, they may be unruly, and discontented with their lot.”

“I imagine not; but, on the contrary, work the harder, to increase their stipend, and, if discontented, be able to buy their freedom.”

“The task would look too big, and they would despair of ever being able to accomplish it. The bondage would be galling to the mind, and they would

resort to all methods, to break the chain which held them."

"That certainly would be dishonest. And do you mean to say that knowledge — learning, I mean — is the twin sister of knavery?"

"Not at all — not at all, Mr. Erskine. But the poet has written,

"Where ignorance is bliss, 't is folly to be wise,"

and these slaves of yours are contented now, because, unable to read, they appreciate no other condition of life. But, allow them to acquire information, and a change would speedily come o'er their spirit; and, instead of expanding their energies for the good of the plantation, their thoughts would dwell on the innumerable advantages of freedom, and be busy in schemes to reach them. If they failed, the creatures would repine at their hard lot, and prove a curse to the owner."

"Am I to understand, then, that, as a Northerner, you disapprove of my plan of benevolence?"

"As a *Northerner*, I might second it, for I consider slavery an evil; but as a physician, asked to prescribe some antidote for the ills of slavery, I say let it alone; it needs no medicine; if left to itself, it will work its own cure."

"True, nature is strong in her own constitution; and if you keep out drugs and purgatives, and not interrupt the machinery by accident or abuse, she will take care of herself. But I heard so much said, when I was in the city of Washington, about educating the

black, I thought I would try it on, and see how it worked on a large scale. For you must know, that many a slave, first and last, has been taught to read and write, and remained faithful to his master."

The schoolmaster thought Mr. Erskine immovable. Yet, he inferred from the scope of his remarks, that some kind spot in his heart had been reached by the philanthropist; and, for a wonder, he proposed to give the blacks *some* education, and thus discharge what, perhaps, he deemed a moral duty.

"I said, Mr. Erskine, that I considered slavery an evil. Do not misunderstand me. I do not mean to say that it is a sin, involving moral depravity. The —"

Mr. Erskine had a reply at hand, and was upon the point of uttering it, but as the schoolmaster evidently was not through, he simply remarked,

"Proceed, sir, if you please."

"The institution of slavery dates far back into antiquity. Whoever has read the page of history attentively, must have observed, that a system of vassalage has existed, to a greater or less extent, in every age and country; that individual has been subject to individual, and even nation to nation, until one has good reason for supposing, that it is a part of the great moral economy."

"And if ever free, they have worked themselves out of bondage, is it not so, sir?"

"You mean fought for their right to freedom, either by recompense or bright deeds?"

"Exactly, sir."

“Such is the record, as I read it,” replied the schoolmaster, “and such being the record — the authenticity of which rests not either in doubt or conjecture — I can not conceive it to be your duty to jeopard rights that have come into your possession in the ordinary course of humanity. If you wish to give them away, my advice is to sign an act of emancipation at once, for then you will have prevented evil acts from evil designs, and not injure your neighbor.”

“I have too much confidence in my blacks to fear any such consequences. I do n’t believe that you could hire them to run away, if that is your meaning,” replied Mr. Erskine with abruptness.

“Well, sir, if you have fully considered the subject, and are ready to take the risk, I will commence the task of instruction, and see how it works,” replied the schoolmaster, abandoning his project of changing the determination of Mr. Erskine, and withdrew to his chamber to make out a catalogue of books for the use of his pupils.

The overseer was surprised when he heard what the planter proposed to do, and so expressed himself to him. But it was of no use. Mr. Erskine had taken his position, and Pompey was dispatched to Millwood for such books as were designated by the schoolmaster.

On the following Monday school commenced at the hovel in the lane, as previously arranged. The boys were there long before the hour; and time with them moved so tardily, that they watched for the entrance of the schoolmaster with nearly the same anxiety that

children at the circus look for the entrance of the clown into the ring. Indeed, it is quite likely that they anticipated some amateur performance in the art of legerdemain, or the feats of the gymnasium. He at length made his appearance, and was received with silent but respectful attention. "Their manners are good," he thought to himself, "and with a pliable disposition, I shall make them learn."

The negresses, and some of the negroes who hung back from work that morning, came down, as they said, to see the show, and were loitering around the schoolhouse, surmising a variety of things that were to happen. Neither Jeff nor Cæsar could persuade themselves to remain away.

"Wha' is de gemman guine to do wid dat stick?" asked the former, pointing to a beechen switch that the schoolmaster laid on the table.

Cæsar, casting his eyes in that direction, suggested that "He was guine to whip the boys."

"Golly! dat's um, ar' it? I'll seed to dat," said Jeff, and walked to the door of the hovel, and looked for his Joe. "Here Joe," said he, "come out of dar. I'll do my own flogging."

The schoolmaster expressed his astonishment at this unceremonious intrusion, and remarked that "school had only just begun."

"And when does um end?" inquired Jeff, in a saucy tone of voice.

"I shall report you to your master, sir, if any more disturbance is created. I command silence, and as you do not belong to the school, I request you to go

about your own business," replied the schoolmaster, with earnestness.

"Well, den, jist say wha' you are guine to do wid dat stick afore you?"

"It is none of your business, sir! you black dirty clout. And if you do n't remove yourself from the doorway, I'll try its virtues upon you," said the schoolmaster, and seized the switch to put his threat in execution.

Jeff's disposition was of the timid kind, and entertaining a feeling of horror at personal violence, especially to himself, he left the hovel.

Mr. Bates ascertained, upon examination, that the boys, for the most part, were ignorant of the alphabet, and that he must devote most of his school hours in learning his pupils their letters. This seemed so much like teaching an infant school, that he felt humbled, and was ashamed and vexed with himself, that he must "stoop so low to conquer." There did not seem, however, to be any other alternative than to proceed in this humble calling, and he accordingly devoted himself to the work, with as much earnestness and heart as he could muster. It seemed to him, that their minds were not as bright as those of white persons of a similar age. For he experienced great difficulty in making them comprehend the instruction. On account of his inexperience, he at first thought this dullness might be attributable to an absence of simplicity in his method of instruction, as he had been for years engaged in seminaries where the higher branches of learning were taught. And he directed his attention

to that point. But, either he did not make much progress in acquiring the art of teaching these fundamental rudiments of education, or else the boys were uncommonly stupid—for it was certain that they did not make much headway. He had run his school into the fourth week, and they could scarcely, with one or two exceptions, spell a word with one syllable. Yet, he thought, he had earned his wages, and consoled himself with this reflection. His duties, however, at the mansion, were more congenial to his feelings, and recompensed him, in some measure, for his unhappiness at the hovel. Teaching there seemed more like teaching; and the hours of recreation were enlivened by the smiles, blandishments, and accomplishments of the sweet Mary. Frederick, among other branches of study, was engaged upon the law of nations, using Vattel as his text-book. This, together with Paley's Philosophy, occupied the most of his school hours. He was thus not only acquiring information upon the subject of international rights, but acquainting himself minutely with the moral rights and duties of persons, in all the diversified relations of life. When he reached that part of Paley which treats of slavery, he was unable to perceive or comprehend the moral right under which his father held the service of his slaves, remarking to Mr. Bates, that their ancestors may have come from Africa, and suffered the horrors of the middle passage.

“That would not affect the right, unless knowledge of their condition in Africa was known to the original purchaser, and not even that, at this day; for the

present slaves owe their life and means of living to you, and until that debt is discharged, can not, even on Mr. Paley's principle, claim their freedom," replied the schoolmaster.

"Do you mean to assert that the blood which flows in Pompey's veins was *ever* free?" inquired Frederick.

"As to that, I can not say. But, there are many slaves whose ancestors did come from Africa."

"And what was their condition in that country?"

"Their own masters, of course, as black is the color indigenous to the human race in that country."

"If so, how happens it, then, that they became slaves? For certainly no nation, without violating the law as laid down in Vattel, could rob them of their freedom. And this country has not made war upon Africa."

"Oh! as to that," replied the schoolmaster, desirous of terminating the colloquy, "you must know, or if you do not, let me inform you, that there are many tribes in that country, each striving for the mastery over the other; and the more powerful sell, to the white men, those whom they subject to their dominion, for trinkets, and gold, and such other commodities as may be offered in exchange."

"Then they are not their own masters, after all, but have lost their freedom before they are, in common parlance, 'sold into slavery;' is not this so?"

"I think it is said, that they are sometimes caught and manacled, when acting as their own masters, on their native soil."

"By whom?"

“The officers of some negro king.”

“Against whose power they can not defend themselves?”

“Of course that must be the reason.”

“Then, according to this same Doctor Paley, their natural rights were lost, because they had not the power to protect themselves. To speak nearer the mark, their rights, in this respect, were *never* perfect. Not possessing the means of subsistence for man, even in the natural state, their rights were imperfect, for the reason that they could not retain the dominion over the earth. And when it came to that point, ignorant of all art or science, they must either starve and die, or work for their superiors and live. They, obeying the impulses of nature, involuntarily preferred the latter, and became slaves. Is not this so?”

“I believe, Frederick, you state the case as it is. But it was the triumph of ‘might against right.’ In a moral point of view, the superior ought not to have taken advantage of necessity, and reduced them to vassalage *forever*, but only for such a length of time as would enable them to ransom their freedom.”

“And pray, what was that, but the price of their subsistence for life?”

“It does not appear so; for a small sum, the king would suffer them to return to their savannas and fastnesses, and inhale once more the glorious air of freedom!”

“Ah! my instructor, but will you be so kind as to intimate where that small sum was to be obtained? Not from their own means, for they possessed nothing;

not from labor for the king, for he had no labor for them to perform."

The schoolmaster was puzzled for a reply, and hesitated what to say,

"If they could have pawned their bodies for the sum demanded," finally said he, "they would have escaped the thralldom of the king."

"That was done, sir, and they are now, morally speaking, in the hands of the pawnbroker, awaiting redemption."

This reply was unexpected to Mr. Bates. He felt that his pupil thought deeper than himself, and this impression wounded his vanity; but he was unwilling to acknowledge it, by his silence.

"The weakness or poverty of those imbecile creatures, in their original state, does not excuse the rapacity. Like the wild animal, it was their right to roam at pleasure; and like the birds of the air, to make their habitations wherever they might chance to light. Such was their destiny, as allotted by an overruling Power," remarked the schoolmaster, at the same time closing the text-book.

"And in the dispensation of Providence, by that same overruling Power, their destiny allotted them for a different sphere of action from the animal and the bird; for they have neither the instinct of the former, nor the heavenly nature of the latter," replied the pupil.

"Well, really, Frederick, you will some day become a metaphysician. But you must learn to abandon sophistry."

"Why, sir, is there not a king among animals, as well as among birds? Think you, that the lion would consent to starve, because the jackal had nothing to eat; or would the eagle let loose his prey, from his high cliff in the skies, because the buzzards were famishing below?

"Oh! certainly not."

"Then, upon what principle of moral justice, can you reverse this order of Divinity, and make the creator supply the wants of the creature, without the right of demanding a recompense in return?"

Mr. Bates had no answer to make, but contented himself with simply saying that the lesson for that day was satisfactorily recited, and descended the stairs for recreation.

Mary was sitting in the drawing-room, as chirp as a bird, and as blooming as a rosebud. She appeared to have the faculty of enjoyment. With a guileless heart, and a mind free of care, every hour came laden with fresh delights, and she wondered why others could be unhappy. Fond of reading, and a proficient in music, the time passed lightly with her; and her brothers were always ready to cater for her amusement. And when they were absent at the schoolroom, and her father abroad upon the plantation, tired of thumbing the piano, "many a time and oft" would she place her harp upon the window, and, listening to its wild symphonious notes, as the balmy zephyrs came o'er it, look out upon the valley and the hills, with the growing crops and green foliage, that never looked half so lovely before. She was thus amusing herself, when

a gentleman entered the door. So much interested was she in the contemplation of the scene before her, that she did not notice him. As a surprise, he came softly to her side, and for a moment joined in the view. So wrapt were her senses in the enchantment, that his presence did not attract attention.

“Mary!” he abruptly exclaimed. The voice startled her, and as she turned her face and looked up, she was accosted with a kiss from the lips of the schoolmaster. She pushed them away with her hands; the blood, with magic celerity, rushed deeply into her countenance, and she instantly rose from her seat and left the room. As she passed through the hall, she caught the eye of Frederick, and she walked it with such rapid strides, so unlike her usual gait, that his curiosity was awakened to know the cause, and he ran to overtake her.

“Mary, Mary!” exclaimed the brother, “what trouble has overtaken you? what in the world is the matter?”

“Oh! Frederick, I know not what to think or say,” she replied, her eyes moistened with tears.

“Why! pray tell me what *is* the trouble, Mary?” said her brother, very excitedly.

“An insult.”

“An insult!” loudly exclaimed her brother, and ready to avenge it. “From whom? and where? Tell it to me, Mary, and the miscreant shall atone for it.”

“The drawing-room,” was the reply, and Frederick turned to go thither.

"Stop," she quickly added, and Frederick again turned, to listen to what his sister might say. "I may be too fast. It may have been intended as a joke, although the manner of it shocked my feelings too much, so to receive it."

"Again, I ask you what it was, and from whom?"

Mary explained.

"The schoolmaster! Mr. Bates, our schoolmaster!" said Frederick.

"It *was* Mr. Bates, and I presume you will now find him in the room, by the window."

Frederick was astonished at this freedom of the schoolmaster; and at a loss how to construe it, whether as an affront or a playful jest, he walked into the drawing-room. And sure enough, there was the schoolmaster, at the window, listening to the melody of the harp, as unconcerned as if nothing uncommon had occurred.

'Have you seen Mary, since you come down stairs?' said Frederick to the schoolmaster, as if he had not seen her himself.

"Yes. She only now passed out into the hall. Did you not meet her? She can not be far off."

"No, I did not *meet* her," said Frederick, ironically, "but I overtook her at the end of the hall. She was in tears, sir!"

"Ah! I am very sorry to hear that."

"And in consequence of an insult from you, sir!"

"Insult! Oh! not at all. You allude to the kiss, I suppose."

"I think you certainly must concede it to be a great impropriety, sir."

“Why, Frederick, I know of no reason for giving it that name. It is not so viewed at the North.”

“Of itself, sir, quite harmless. But the manner in which you saluted my sister, makes the act objectionable.”

“I beg the pardon of both of you.”

“Too much familiarity upon so short an acquaintance.”

“I will take care and not repeat it,” said the school-master, biting his nether lip; and leaving the window, sallied out upon the piazza, and then down the lawn, and meeting Mr. Erskine, they walked to the brow of the hill in the rear of the mansion; and then strolling to the river, whiled away the afternoon in chatting over the news of the day.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SECRET LEAGUE OF REBELLION.

BERTUCCIO.— Let all the rest be there :

I have a stranger to present to them.

CALENDARO.—A stranger ! doth he know the secret ?

BERTUCCIO.— Yes.

CALENDARO.—And have you dared to peril your friends' lives

On a rash confidence in one we know not ?

We left Uncle Tom, some pages back, in possession of "his feelings" again, and vexed, in addition, because he could not bring Jeff into his views. Those feelings daily became worse and worse; they were a torment to him through the day, and were his evil spirits at night. His appearance and actions did not escape the notice of Dinah. Ever alive to her husband's prosperity and happiness, she was more sensible than would have been acknowledged, to the keen and unceasing anguish in which her dear Tom seemed to writhe day in and day out, from week to week. She would offer palliatives for its assuagement, but they were uniformly declined. Aware of the jealousy entertained by him toward the open-minded and tender-hearted Hector, she, on more occasions than one,

ventured to mention the subject, hoping to discover the tender point, and, if practicable, soften the asperity, if not heal the wound. But these advances of her's were not only, in the end, simply declined, but they were rejected in cold disdain, and, not unfrequently, in vociferous anger. And thus finding herself debarred the pleasure of sharing or alleviating his ills, she submissively yielded to the necessity, and prayed in her heart that he might become a more dutiful servant, and a better man. When it was announced at the quarters, that Mr. Erskine had engaged a teacher for the little children, no one was heard to scoff but Uncle Tom. It was true, that he could not appreciate the favor, for he knew not what education was; but whatever it might be, he believed there was a sinister motive that actuated the master. Prejudice — perhaps it might be more charitable to say madness — had so warped or blinded his innate sense of right and wrong, that he was unwilling to think, for an instant of time, even, that the same kind heart which, in its bountiful goodness, had hovered over him for nearly half a century, could now overlook his “short comings,” and, like an angel of grace, not only forgive *him*, but bless his blood, even to the second generation. And, for aught we know, it may seem strange to any person. But Mr. Erskine's property descended to him by inheritance. If he had more or other slaves, the same was the gift of nature, nourished and sustained by his paternal care. His means were abundant for shelter and sustenance; his confidence in the affection of his household was unbounded; and if the rising generation

was susceptible of education, he believed that its acquirement would redound to their happiness and his advantage. Besides, at Washington, he had heard much sympathy expressed for the ignorance of the blacks; and he fully resolved that he would learn, by practical illustration, how far removed they were from the condition of the brute. That they would avail themselves of the lights of knowledge, to do wrong, he did not believe. And if possessed of consciences, like the free-born, he believed that these silect lecturers would be so many monitors, to confine them to the path of rectitude.

It happened that two of Uncle Tom's children attended the school. One of them was a bright lad, and studious. And such was the proficiency which he made, as compared with his fellow-students, that he attracted the attention of the schoolmaster, and sometimes was petted, at the expense of the other pupils. Naturally enough, this familiarity banished from the mind of the lad any bashful reserve, and by degrees ripened into a fondness for the society of his teacher. After the "school hours" were over, and his associates were wending their way homeward, he would linger at the hovel until Mr. Bates was ready. Finally, one day, and soon after the unpleasant interview with Frederick in the drawing-room, the schoolmaster inquired whose child he was. He said that his mother was called Dinah, and his father Uncle Tom.

"Ah! him that has a cabin with a veranda in front. Very good. Can you say to your father, that he has a smart son, and that if he will stray down

the lane, after dark, he will hear something to his advantage?"

"Yes, mass'r."

"That 's a good boy; and here is a penny for your pains."

The lad made a very thankful bow, and ran to overtake the other children.

"Stop!" said the schoolmaster, and the command was no sooner uttered than obeyed. "Be careful and not mention what I have told you. It is for your father's ear alone."

"Yes, mass'r."

"And you will be sure not to forget the errand?"

"Yes, mass'r," replied the lad, and ran up the lane at the top of his speed.

Mr. Bates did not converse with his usual freedom, at the tea-table that evening. He had no observations to make, or questions to ask, and his replies were in monosyllables. The atmosphere was sultry and enervating, and Mr. Erskine, who was peculiarly fond of a chat over his coffee cup, excused this unsociableness, attributing it to the weariness of the weather. Frederick and Mary, neither of whom had mentioned the scene in the drawing-room, attributed the schoolmaster's reserve to that. And so believing, they more strongly suspected that there was a design in it; especially as he, at the time of the occurrence, endeavored to make so light of it. Mary, therefore, and also Frederick, instead of regretting the dullness and unamiableness of Mr. Bates, were glad to be relieved from his presence, and were as much disinclined to converse. As

soon as coffee was over, the schoolmaster withdrew to his chamber, and the family to the piazza, to fan themselves, and enjoy the light breezes of the evening.

“Come, Mary, can you not sing me that sweet favorite of yours, or is it too cruel to ask you, when the air is so oppressive?” said the father.

“The air is never too oppressive to gratify you,” replied the daughter, and reached for her guitar. And while his brow was fanned by the delicious breezes, that now began “to creep gently o’er” the valley from the hills beyond, she fingered her light instrument, and he listened to its plaintive but ecstatic strains, as as she sang, in the richest melody, the following simple lines of Shelley :

Good night ? ah ! no ; the hour is ill,
Which severs those it should unite ;
Let us remain together still,
Then it will be good night.

How can I call the lone night good,
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight ?
Be it not *said*, though understood,
Then it will be [’]good night.

To hearts which near each other move,
From evening close to morning light,
The night is good ; because, my love,
They never *SAY* good night.

“Excellent, Mary ; and I will beg you to repeat it again, some other evening,” said her father, delighted with the song and her filial affection.

Mr. Bates listened in his chamber, and was envious of the happiness which prevailed. Soon after nightfall,

he crept silently down the stairs, and passing out of the back door of the hall, directed his footsteps, with a soft, but quick tread, toward the hovel. Fearful, lest Uncle Tom might not meet him according to the appointment; and perhaps, vain of the notice paid to him by the schoolmaster, divulge the lad's errand at the quarters, he hurried his gait, as he approached the lane, to remove his suspense. When he neared the hovel, hearing no footsteps but his own, and seeing "no signs of life," his heart began to throb with rapid pulsation. He thought to return, but upon going to the door and looking inside, sure enough, Uncle Tom had promptly complied with the request, and was seated in the schoolroom, quietly awaiting his arrival. The slave rose as the schoolmaster entered, and uncovering his head, placed his hat under his arm.

"Resume your seat," said the schoolmaster, in the tone almost of a whisper, "and we will converse freely and at our leisure."

"Berry good, mass'r," replied Uncle Tom, and was again seated.

"What is the age of your little boy?"

"'Bout ten, I 'spect, mass'r."

"He is full of brains."

"Takes arter his fader, den," said Uncle Tom, laughingly, and proud of the compliment.

"So I supposed. And when I reflected upon his lowly lot in life, I thought that the possession of so much brain would be a curse to him, as he grew up."

"Ki, mass'r, enty he guine to be good?"

"Oh! not that."

"Wha' you guine to say, mass'r?" asked Uncle Tom, who naturally disliked indirection, and impatient to understand the schoolmaster's idea.

"As he grows into manhood, his brains will grow stronger and stronger, and develope their power more and more."

"Berry like, mass'r."

"And if Mr. Erskine really carries out his plan of education, as now commenced, the lad will be able to appreciate the natural rights of man in all their phases; and, repining at his hard fate, his anguish of mind will be keener, and he will be more miserable than he would be, if he remained in ignorance.

"Dunno, mass'r."

"I know it will be so; and it is a great pity. I sometimes think I will abandon the school. I do not like to be an instrument of misery to any person."

"An' den not learn um any more, mass'r?"

"Not here."

"Whar' den? my ole massa hab no oder place."

"In a more Northern latitude."

"Can not be done, mass'r."

"Why not? I could take him home with me."

"Wha'! mass'r, wha'! you guine to hab um run away? No, no," said Uncle Tom, shaking his head.

"I am astonished that you decline the offer."

"Wha'! mass'r, you hab um run away from friends, an! guang among enemies, an' hab nothin' to eat! No, no."

"You have a queer notion of the state of freedom. Why, man, there you are your own master; and use

for your own pleasures *all* that you earn from your labor."

"An' no massa come 'long an' say to Uncle Tom, 'Dar, gib me part of dat corn an' tobaccy,' an' I'm to hab um all to myself an' Dinah? am dat it?"

"That is it, exactly. From the brains of the lad, I suspected that you would have enough to comprehend my views, and I am happy not to be disappointed."

"But how am I guine to go dar?" asked the slave, beginning to be favorably impressed with the idea.

"Oh! without difficulty."

"I hab no corn, nor monies, to eat or use on de way. Where shall I get um?"

"Oh! you can take enough from the quarters to last you until you reach the free states; and then there will be no difficulty in procuring all that you may desire. You will find the people all friends."

"Ar' dey all frien's of de col'd gemman, an' sticking frien's?"

"There are no slaves in the land of freedom. All are free and equal."

"An' all de corn an' tobaccy am free an' equal, an' each nigger guine to hab all he takes? Dat's it. I likes um," said Uncle Tom, enraptured with his notions of freedom and equality.

"They are free to go and come as they please; eat, drink, and be merry, wherever, and as often as they choose; work as their will may dictate, and no overseer to stand over their bodies with the whip; and the rights of all under government, one and the same."

"Dat 's it. Dat state of freedom is good. I likes um. Dat 's better than free niggers in ole Virginny," said Uncle Tom, more and more delighted with the theme.

"Oh! the free negroes here do not enjoy freedom," remarked the schoolmaster. "They have no rights, in fact."

"Dunno, mass'r, how that am. Abe, the hostler up dar at Millwood, is free. I 'spects dat he is better off than he was afore. But den, he had poor massa. I hab more respectable massa. He is rich and great man. Abe's massa was not half so big. Dat might make difference in de pleasures of dat freedom."

"I suspect that the burdens of the one are as great as that of the other; although the poor master, perhaps, might ransom for a lesser price than the rich."

"Dunno, mass'r."

"Are you acquainted with this Abe you speak of?"

"I knows him little; not much acquainted wid him. His ole massa libs down de riber, some four or five miles.

"Abe, I think, might be of much assistance to you, in running you out of slavery."

"Dunno, mass'r."

"Can you not have an interview with him?"

"Wha' dat, mass'r?"

"I mean to ask if you can not see him, and plan an escape with him?"

"Dunno, mass'r."

"Can you not make some business at Millwood, and avail yourself of that opportunity to disclose to him your wishes?"

"Uncle Tom has no business anywhar' but on de plantation, now dat ole massa no longer likes um?"

"What is that you say?" quickly asked the schoolmaster.

"Massa no longer likes me, nor I him. Ole Hector is in my shoes, now," replied the slave, drawing a long breath.

This intelligence gave the schoolmaster new hopes, and a new and different course of policy occurred to his mind. Instead of relying solely upon the glorious visions of freedom, he would appeal to the lowly and base passion of revenge. If once thoroughly aroused, he thought it would be a more lasting and surer instrument to bring into use, in effecting his object. And without any apparent intention to change the drift of his conversation, he inquired the cause of this change of feeling on the part of the master.

"Dunno, mass'r."

"Have you not performed your labor as usual?"

"Yas, mass'r."

"Ah! Hector probably prejudiced you with bad stories."

"Dun-no, how dat am."

"But, if you performed your labor cheerfully, I see no reason for the master to change his conduct toward you."

"Dat's de trouble. I was not guine to do more than I could."

"What was the trouble?"

"He pitted me 'gainst Hector, an' ca'se dat stout nigger happened to beat me, I was treated wid blame."

"I presume that your master meant to disgrace you. And I should not wonder if he meant to kill you with overwork, as you are getting past your prime."

"Dat 's it. He meant to kill me, an' failing, he shut me up in dis hovel to starve an' die!"

"In this hovel, do you say, Uncle Tom?"

"Yas, mass'r, in dis hovel."

"But when did that happen, and how did you prevent the accomplishment of the design?" with pretended sympathy, asked the schoolmaster.

"Dunno exact time; month or so afore you come on to de plantation. An' arter staying here all day an' night, wid nothin' to eat, massa overseer took pity on me, and let me out."

"Horrible! horrible punishment, to starve to death."

"I'd rather be whipp'd to death, an' finish um."

"Far preferable."

"I neber can forgib massa for dat."

"You never should forgive him. And if you would listen to me, as a friend, I should advise you to get out of his clutches as soon as possible."

"Yas, mass'r. But I'm afeerd to attempt it. If I should fail, den I certainly should die; an' its great ways off to the state of freedom. An' I hab no friends."

"If you will do as I direct, you shall not fail," was the encouraging answer of the schoolmaster.

"Well, I 'm miserable now. I can not be more so hereafter," answered the slave, not quite determined what to do.

"When you are in the land of freedom, you will wonder that you hesitated."

“Well, wha’ you direct me to do, mass’r?”

“When you say that you will follow my direction, I will inform you what to do.”

“Well, mass’r, I will do as you say.”

“Are you resolved?” inquired the schoolmaster, with much earnestness. Uncle Tom hesitated, and remained silent. “If this is a specimen of your courage,” added the schoolmaster, “you ought to be a slave and die!”

Uncle Tom essayed to speak, but the words stuck in his throat. The schoolmaster noticed the effort, and smiled.

“I am glad that language fails you. I would not hear you speak, unless you can talk freedom,” said he tauntingly.

“Have pity, mass’r. I was guine to ax you wha’ to do with Dinah, an’—” Uncle Tom could no longer restrain himself, and burst into tears, leaving the sentence unfinished.

“Dinah shall accompany you,” said the schoolmaster.

“An’ what am I guine to do with my children?”

“Do with them? why, man, they shall accompany you, also.”

“Dunno, mass’r, how I ’m guine to do all dis.”

“Easy enough.”

“Dunno; too many, I fear, to go in company.”

“Too many! Why, man, the whole plantation can go, if they will follow my directions. And this is precisely what I would like to see take place. If the master will not emancipate them, why then, I say, let

the blacks *rise together*, and emancipate themselves. This will make short work, and terminate in a victory that will *tell* against this evil institution of slavery all through the South, and redound to the cause of freedom everywhere."

"Dat I should like, mass'r; all try together, an' den, if we were caught, massa would not kill, for he would need our labor on de plantation."

"Beyond a doubt."

"Den, I am **RESOLVED**," replied Uncle Tom

The schoolmaster, having accomplished the object he had in view, when the lad received the errand, he, at first, was disposed to adjourn this meeting to a subsequent evening; but lest Uncle Tom might recant, he concluded to lead him further into his schemes then, and take the risk of his late return to the mansion creating any suspicion there of the rectitude of his conduct.

"Well, sir, as I promised to tell you how the escape must be made, if you would *resolve* to comply with my direction, I shall keep my promise; but mark you, what I say to you is in strict confidence, and to be kept as a secret. Do you understand me?"

"Yas, mass'r. I tell no nigger."

"Nor white man?"

"I neber talk to white man in confidence, mass'r. No fear dar of dis nigger."

"Ah! true; I should have known better. A fool to ask the question. I was thinking of you, as if you was now inhaling the air of freedom."

"I thought allers sin' I know'd you, dat you was

fast hoss, mass'r," replied Uncle Tom, and laughed at his wit.

"My friend," said the schoolmaster, surprised at the slave's frivolity, "we have too serious business on foot to be merry-making!"

"I ax y'r pardon, mass'r. I felt dat I was now in dat freedom you spoke to me 'bout. Dat's all, mass'r."

"We will proceed, then, to the work, as it is getting late."

"Yas, mass'r. I'm all ears, as Dinah told me, when I ax'd her to lib wid dis nigger."

"You say you know Abe, that free negro at Millwood?"

"Yas, mass'r; Uncle Tom hab known Abe sin' he was born."

"Well, your master gets his school books at Millwood, and to-morrow I shall intimate to him that more books are needed in this school, and shall request him to send to Millwood for them. Pompey, whom he would probably send, is sick, and"—

"Pompey sick! I allers liked dat nigger."

"Yes, but not seriously: and I will say to Mr. Erskine, that I will make out a memorandum, and hand it to the overseer. He will assent to that. You, to-morrow morning, pretend to the overseer that you are unwell, and I will hand the memorandum to him, after the others are in the meadow. He will hesitate whom to dispatch. I will suggest you, and that perhaps you are well enough to ride up there. If he assents, you go, and find Abe. Tell him what is afoot; ask him

to meet me and yourself here, day after to-morrow night, and then we will perfect the arrangements."

Uncle Tom shook his head.

"What! Does not this proposition meet your approbation? We *must have* the assistance of Abe"

"Dat 's lie, massa! Dis nigger neber cheats! When I would n't work, I allers told massa overseer dat it was 'my feelings' dat was in de way."

"This is not what should be called by that name. In polite life, it would be called an intrigue. Nothing more. Besides, you recollect that the religious book says, 'that we may do evil that good may come.' I heard your master say this within these two weeks."

"Dunno, mass'r."

"But you are not at liberty to hesitate. You have solemnly promised to do as I direct. This was the only condition upon which I would consent to confer with you. And you declared that you was *resolved*."

"Yas, mass'r."

"And will you break your promise so quick?"

"I allers keep my word, mass'r, an' if dis is wrong, I throws all de blame on your shoulders. I go."

"That is right, Uncle Tom; and mind and be as willing hereafter."

"Yas, mass'r."

"Then I have nothing further to say to you now. I will meet you and Abe here at the time appointed."

"Yas, mass'r."

"And mind you tell not what has happened to-night to no living person—not even to Dinah."

"No, mass'r," replied Uncle Tom, and they separated: the slave to his cabin, to dream of freedom; and the schoolmaster to his apartment at the mansion, to ponder upon mischief to its hospitable and open-hearted proprietor.

Mr. Bates appeared at the breakfast table, the ensuing morning, with as much unconcern and *nonchalance* as he could assume. His absence the previous evening was not noticed, and he went to the task of instruction with his usual cheerfulness. Mr. Erskine seemed to have an uncommon good flow of spirits; and the morning itself was delightful. A shower of rain had fallen during the night, and the atmosphere was invigorating. The grass in the meadows, and the corn in the fields, the trees that lined the lawn, and the shrubbery in the garden and orchard, the hills adjacent, and the valley itself—all had put on a new dress; and the birds, as they skipped from tree to tree and nestled among the leaves, chirped their wild lays with more facility and sweetness. Mary had forgotten the affront in the drawing-room, and Frederick listened to the lesson of his instructor with strict attention. "And the day wore on, and the evening grew nigh." The family sipped their coffee, quietly and cheerfully, and then, as was their custom, repaired to the piazza and the drawing-room, to while away the evening.

"My little urchins, then," said the planter to the schoolmaster, "are making rapid improvement? You must set apart some day, and Mary and myself will come down and see them in their studies."

“Oh! you will be surprised at their progress, sir. I confess to you my surprise.”

“They are out of the spelling book, already, you say?”

“Oh! they are not entirely through with it.”

“Ah! I supposed such was the fact, and that you desired to put their little minds upon some new topic.”

“You did not comprehend me, sir. There are different kinds, adapted to the successive stages of instruction through which they pass.”

“Ah! it is a new or improved edition, more easy to comprehend.”

“Not exactly that, sir.”

“Well, I am getting rather antiquated, Mr. Bates, and as for that, I can not boast of a very thorough education; for, in my young days, school books were rare commodities, and good teachers rarer. Besides, I did not have much inclination in that direction; I preferred the horse, the hunt, and the fish. You must excuse my imbecility,” said the planter, vexed that he was so stupid in his inquiries.

“Oh! sir, you do yourself injustice. Your reading is good, and very general. I, indeed, have been instructed by your conversation.”

“My wife, sir — Mrs. Erskine — God bless her!” and he dropped a tear.

“Pardon me for this, sir,” exclaimed the school-master, fearful that he had probed a sore place.

“Oh! a mere spasm,” replied the planter, wiping the tears from his eyes. “As I was remarking, sir, Mrs. Erskine was of great benefit to me in that way.”

“Well educated, I presume.”

“Of exquisite perception and refined intellect herself, she was at the tip-top of happiness when diverting her friends with her interesting conversation. Oh! how often have I listened by the hour. She had read most everything; familiar with almost every subject you might name, and most happy in the faculty of communicating her thoughts to the companions whom she was entertaining.”

“I do not remember of hearing her maiden name.”

“Dessaussuere, sir, of Carolina.”

“A foreign name.”

“Of French extraction, sir.”

“Overseer told me to hand you this, massa,” said Pompey, who now came upon the piazza, and delivered to Mr. Erskine a paper.

“Ah! the bill for the books,” said he, and showed it to the schoolmaster.

“Correct, and the charges are reasonable, Mr. Erskine.”

“I was fearful Tom might blunder.”

“Correct, and back in good time,” replied the schoolmaster, and shortly left his seat.

We ask the reader to go with us again to the old hovel in the lane. There do we find Mr. Bates, sitting alone, in deep thought. On a sudden, he hears footsteps, and listening to the sound, as it becomes more and more audible, he knows that his comrades are approaching, and he is in readiness to receive them.

“Uncle Tom, you have, in good faith, followed my

direction?" said he, as the slave entered the door in company with another black.

"Yas, mass'r."

"And this is —"

"Abe, de ole hostler."

"Very good. I am glad to meet you here. Now, be seated and we will confer together at our leisure."

"Uncle Tom, is dis the schoolmass'r dat you told me 'bout?" inquired Abe, intending to be sure of his man before he committed himself too far.

"Yas, Abe, dis is de gemman."

"Berry good. Proceed."

"You are aware of the trouble which is brewing on the plantation?"

"Sa!"

"You have heard that —"

"Sa! I hears of nothin'—nothin'."

"Why, what does this conduct mean, Uncle Tom?"

"Abe fights um shy, mass'r. He is ole nigger."

"Have you not let him into the secret?"

"Not at all, mass'r. You told me to say nothin' to nobody."

"Ah! so I did, and you resolved to follow my instructions. I am glad to see you so observant."

"Well, mass'r, I 'm all ears an' no mouth," said Abe, impatient to know the occasion of the meeting.

"Why, Abe, you are free, I am informed."

"Yas, by golly! I bought it myself, an' no thanks."

"And Uncle Tom also desires to be free."

"Berry good. He must work hard and lay um up, — jist as I did, an' he will git free."

"Dat 's it; I know'd Abe would say so," said the slave.

"Such have been his efforts for many a long year. But his family is too large. He can not accomplish it. Your master was poor; and his is rich. The value of his body is marked too high for him to raise the amount by his own labor."

"An' he wants dis nigger to lend a hand?"

"That is precisely what is desired."

"Well, mass'r, if I had any loose coins 'bout me, I would throw um into his hat; but I 'm sorry to say, dat dis nigger is short dar."

"The expense to you will be very trifling. He desires your services and time."

"Sa!" said Abe, rising from his seat.

"Oh! remain quiet," begged the schoolmaster, "resume the seat again, if you please."

"My services! you say, mass'r?" replied Abe, in his seat. "I am out of service, an' I would n't work on de plantation again for all de niggers in de valley!"

"You misunderstand me, sir. I mean that Uncle Tom desires your personal aid in making his *escape*."

"Ah! dat 's um. Ah, ha! Uncle Tom thinks of cheating the cage some night, an' run away. Is dat de point, mass'r?"

"You comprehend his intention; and as you are at liberty to go and come as you please, if your disposition is right, you can render invaluable assistance. What say you?"

"I must consider, mass'r."

The schoolmaster paused to hear his decision. The slave sighed, and looked most beseechingly. He did not expect any hesitation.

"Will you refuse aid to your fellow black, in such an extremity as this?"

Abe scarcely knew what reply to give. His generosity said yes; but caution suggested no.

"I fear de consequences to myself," finally he remarked.

"And how can you be affected, be the result of the effort what it may?"

"De officer would seize hold of my body, an' de jail would be my home."

"I do not comprehend you."

"Sa!" exclaimed Abe, ignorant of the meaning of the word which the schoolmaster happened to use.

"I do not understand you, Abe."

"Dar is, in ole Virginny, a law 'gainst stealing away niggers, an' dat sticks in my crop."

"Oh! this is the trouble. Why, man, you need have no fear on that account. In the first place *you* do not propose to steal Uncle Tom, and if you did, the proof of the crime must precede conviction."

"If I should git de slave his freedom, it would be known all over Millwood in a jiff."

"Not if you used ordinary discretion, and kept your thoughts to yourself."

"Case I was away from de stable, would be de reason of my being found out, mass'r."

"Ah! I see. If you followed my direction, you would not be absent from your usual place of work."

And am not I—a white man—incurring as much risk as you?”

“Yas, mass’r.”

“I have no fear. As I read the great book, it justifies me in doing my duty, leaving the consequences to God!”

“Well, mass’r, dis nigger hardly knows what to do. It would do my ole heart good to help Uncle Tom. He is de prince of niggers. I knows um long time ago.”

“Then say you will put your shoulder to the wheel, and we will proceed in the business; or we will break up our meeting, and abandon the slave to his lowly lot. It is for you to decide the question. I am controlled by my pure feeling of philanthropy for the oppressed. So far as my own personal interest is concerned, it is of no consequence to me, whether the slaves remain in their present condition, or bask in the sunshine of freedom.”

“Abe, you hab gone too far to back out; say yas,” implored the slave.

“Mass’r, I must ax you question,” said Abe, turning to the schoolmaster, who had risen from his seat, apparently with the intention of bidding them good night.

“Very good. You shall be answered.”

“’Spose we follow your directions, are you sure, mass’r, dat you bring um out safe in de end?”

“Beyond a doubt.”

“So mass’r told dis nigger,” remarked the slave.

“Den I am resolved, mass’r,” replied Abe.

This determination was gratifying, as well to the schoolmaster as the slave; and even Abe felt relieved at his heart, when he made the announcement.

"Come, then," said the former, "we will now proceed at once to plan the escape. We have lost much time by your dalliance in coming squarely up to the work."

"Sa! mass'r," exclaimed Abe, a little alarmed, or perhaps, beginning to be afraid of the schoolmaster; for his address was suddenly different—assuming more the lordly air of a master, than that of a boon companion.

"We must now lay out our work, and concoct the means of executing it promptly. There must be no dilatoriness now, and each must be sure to do his part."

"Berry good, mass'r."

"To begin with, we must be careful and not divulge our secrets, only to those of the blacks who come into the arrangement."

"No, mass'r. How many are to know um?"

"Every slave in this valley who will join us."

"Wha', mass'r! all de niggers dat ar' n't free?"

"Certainly."

"'T is impossible, mass'r."

"That is a mistake of yours, Abe. It is easier for, say twenty, to go away in company, than one."

"How is dat?"

"Why, they can defend themselves, if attacked, with surer success; and then, if they make their escape, they can form a community by themselves, in the land of freedom."

"How is it, Uncle Tom? are there oder niggers dat am guine to run off?"

"Mass'r thinks so. I 'm guine to see."

"And, Abe, we must proceed to learn this by degrees. We must not be in too great a hurry."

"Berry good."

"Uncle Tom will sound them on this point. He has already learned of some who would avail themselves of the opportunity at the proper time. Is it not so, Tom?"

"Yas, mass'r."

"And when we know, with certainty, those that can be relied upon, all must meet together, and arrange the details."

"How long, first, mass'r?"

"I should suppose, within ten days, at the furthest."

"An' whar shall we meet?"

"That must depend upon circumstances. You and Uncle Tom can arrange that."

"Jist so. I shall be at de ole stable, and can be told when to come up."

"Not at all. You must do the running. It will not answer for the slave to go backward and forward to Millwood. That of itself would create suspicion. To avoid this, we propose to use you as messenger between the slaves."

"Berry good."

"We wish you, to-morrow and the next day, to visit your old friends in the valley, and, as occasion may offer, talk to them of freedom. Get the names of those who are anxious to enjoy it, and who, in your opinion,

have the pluck to use the means to reach it, and report to us here. We will then canvass them, and determine how we are to approach them, and divulge the plan. Can you do this, Abe?"

"Yas, mass'r, an' I will do it. I neber put my hand to de plough an' look back."

"Do n't mention um to Dinah. I 'll do dat part."

"Yas, Uncle Tom."

"And be sure and impress upon their minds the impossibility of failure, if they will follow your direction. But be careful and not let them know of this meeting, nor of any concert of action between us now. Otherwise, the whole scheme may be frustrated."

"On dat head, I shall be as mum as a 'possum, mass'r."

"Very well, we now understand each other, and our secrets are one. We will now part company, to meet here again at the time I have designated," said the schoolmaster, satisfied that his scheme of emancipation would work successfully.

Abe, the free negro, was busy circulating among the slaves, in accordance with the direction of the schoolmaster, during the following two days. Contrary to his expectation, he did not find the blacks disposed to run away. In fact, excepting in two or three instances, and on as many plantations, he did not find any that had given the subject a thought. Contented as they were, their views of freedom had not gone beyond the condition of those blacks who had purchased their time of their masters. And the condition of many of this latter class presented to their minds no very

attractive features; and as for going off—away off—from the land of their nativity, among entire strangers, this idea was repulsive to their feelings, and not entertained for a moment. Abe concluded, that most of them, instead of fighting their masters to make an escape, would fight those who should attempt “to run them into freedom.” And even those who fancied a trip, did not evince much anxiety to undertake it, as, in the language of some of them, as reported by Abe, “it would be too long for pleasure.”

However, he met Uncle Tom and the schoolmaster at the appointed time, and reported all he had seen and heard. It was unwelcome information, and damped their hopes. Uncle Tom was not aware that his actions were the promptings of revenge. The schoolmaster had depicted the beauties of freedom in such glowing colors, and his desire to deliver himself from the servility due to his master was so great, that he did not stop to inquire whether his fellow-slaves would experience sensations like himself, but thought only of the gratification of his own wish and desire. And when Abe, in the honest fulfillment of the duty which he had taken upon himself to perform, detailed the numerous conversations he had with the various blacks on the several plantations in the valley, it occurred, for the first time, to the slave, that, perhaps, it was not simply freedom which he sought to enjoy. He now began to reason with himself; and the more he reflected, the more he feared that he should fail, and be more miserable than ever he was before. The schoolmaster observed his downcast appearance, and

attributed it to that despondency which is the natural concomitant of ill luck.

"Never mind, Uncle Tom," said he "all the blacks would jump into freedom, if chance offered; they hate to walk there, as you do. They will be glad to embrace the opportunity of escape, when the way thereof is told them in detail. No being with a soul, can contentedly remain and endure the low degradation of slavery—that infamy of infamies."

These remarks were words of encouragement, and well calculated to straighten into line again his unsteady mind, now oscillating, as it were, between the revengeful feelings of a haughty heart and the dazzling visions of a distempered imagination.

"Never mind my looks, mass'r; I'm all right here," said the slave, bringing his hand upon his breast; "when it gives out here, den I will hollar stop."

"Ah! yes, that is the true spirit. I knew I had not mistaken my man. You, sir, were born for freedom!" replied the schoolmaster, gratified that he now saw his way clear once more.

"Well, mass'r," said Abe, "what is your direction? I have not much more time to lose."

"Do you suppose that the blacks you have named can be trusted?"

"Yas, mass'r."

"Have they had any altercation with their masters?"

"Dunno."

"It is a pity. If they had, their appetites for a runaway would be keener."

"They will bite sharp, if you gib um de vict'als, mass'r."

"Sure of that, Abe?"

"Oh! I know'd so, mass'r."

"Well, we will trust to their honor."

"Agreed to, mass'r."

"Invite them—where shall we say? Abe, give me your counsel."

"Dunno, mass'r. Somewhar' dat 's secret."

"I was thinking of some other place; but, on the whole, I think that this is the spot."

"Yas, mass'r," said Uncle Tom.

"Very good. Can you see them to-day, Abe?"

"Oh! I 'spects so."

"Ask them to come here to-morrow night; and, Abe, tell them to be sure and come separately; for, if they come in squads, it might attract attention."

"Yas, mass'r."

"And say to them, not to come until after it is dark."

"Yas, Abe, pitch dark!" said Uncle Tom.

"Agreed to, gemmen," replied the ostler, in a tone of voice not much above a whisper; and this council was adjourned accordingly.

Abe went to the cabin of a trusty friend, on the neighboring plantation, to tarry for the night. His name was Cæsar, but not the same Cæsar spoken of before. He was smart, and ripe for freedom. Contrary to orders, Abe had made a confidant of this Cæsar, and he was up, awaiting Abe's return, when he entered the cabin. Although long past the usual

hour of going to bed, such was Cæsar's anxiety to know what transpired at the hovel, that he prevailed upon Abe to acquaint him with all the particulars. And when the loquacious hostler finished his story, Cæsar, for the first time, intimated his distrust of the schoolmaster. Abe was astonished that Cæsar should talk so, and insisted that he was the best of friends to the poor slave, and worthy of unlimited confidence. Cæsar finally admitted, that it was the part of generosity, not to condemn him unheard; and, if he was a snake in the grass, they should hear his rattle or hiss in due time to escape his venom. Cæsar, however, was happy to learn that the arrangement was rapidly progressing to a head, and laid down upon his bed and slept soundly. We can not say the same of the hostler. He passed a sleepless night, tossing to and fro in the bunk, and "looked worse for wear" in the morning. But his heart was not faint, and he executed the orders of the schoolmaster with undeviating fidelity; and when night came, he was the first at the hovel.

Mr. Bates did not keep school on that day, and being unwell, as he said, kept himself close in his chamber. At evening, he walked out to refresh himself with the night-breeze, and took occasion to stop at the hovel, soon after Abe entered it. It was not long before the blacks, who had been invited there, began to assemble; and the sable flock, with its white shepherd, were soon gathered into the fold.

Perceiving so many together, agreeably to their promise, and among the number several from his own

quarters, Uncle Tom "took courage," and was remarkably pleasant. He had not looked so much like himself for many weeks.

"Well, mass'r," said Abe, "my boys are here."

"Close the door, Tom, that there may be no caves-droppers."

"Yas, mass'r," replied the slave, and stepped as nimbly as a boy; "I fasten um tight, mass'r."

"How many are here to embark in this enterprise?"

"Ten of um, mass'r," replied the hostler.

"If there are any cowards, now is the time for them to stand up. None! Very good. We will march to freedom together."

"All ready for dis consult."

"The sooner we put the plans in execution, the better will be the chance of success."

"I agrees to dat," remarked Jeff, the fiddler.

"Yas, mass'r," said Jack, who belonged on a plantation near Millwood.

"No delay. I'm guine to be free in a jiff," said the Cæsar who had lodged Abe.

"Yas, mass'r," echoed all.

"Excellent spirit; but we must take care and cover our tracks. It is easier to talk than to act. We must observe secrecy, and act together as a unit."

"Yas, mass'r. Tell um wha' to do, and I'll be boun' dat ebery ting will come out exactly as you said."

"We must have some place of rendezvous. Where shall that be? You know the make of the country roundabout, better than myself."

"Dunno, mass'r. Speak um yourself," said Abe.

"Perhaps some of our comrades do know. I should like to hear some of them express their views."

"Oh! mass'r, I know'd good place," remarked Jeff, and all gave their attention.

"Name it, if you please."

"Way up on de high hill in de foot path. I lay'd dar one arternoon, an' nobody come along but de lightnen an' thunder. Berry secret place; an' mass'r you hab no tracks dar; you can kiver um up wid de leaves. Oh! bags, bags of um up dar!"

"Pshaw! you simpleton. You misunderstand my meaning, when I say that we must cover our tracks."

"Wha'! wha' dat, mass'r?" asked Jeff, who was not alone in his wonderment.

"We must proceed so stealthy that the pursuers will not hear our footsteps, and keep our thoughts to ourselves, so that there will be nothing from which they can conjecture our designs, or learn whither we are going."

"Oh! dat 's it, mass'r. Berry good. They will not cotch dis nigger. When I starts, I 'm guine like a race-horse," said Jeff, in no respect miffed by the harsh remark of the schoolmaster.

"I think," finally said the schoolmaster, "that Abe's barn at Millwood, is the place for the rendezvous. Why say you?"

"Dat 's um," was the universal response.

"An' when, mass'r?" inquired the hostler.

"Ah! that is a very important item in our league. Our friends, I presume, can name the time better than myself. What say you to this?"

“Suit your own convenience, mass’r,” said Uncle Tom.

“Can you all be ready to move on from the rendezvous two weeks from to-night?”

“Yas, mass’r,” was the united reply.

“Well, then, let that be the time. And as you assemble at the barn, come into the town from different directions; and go leisurely along the street, as if you had nothing in particular upon your mind. In the intermediate time, get yourselves in readiness for a long journey, and fill your pockets with as much ready money as you conveniently can, so that you may have something to defray necessary expenses.”

“Gosh, Uncle Tom, dat ar’ advice will fetch us to de state of freedom!” exclaimed Jeff.

“Is this the order of our arrangement? If any one has objection, let him make it known now.”

The entire company approved of the plan of the schoolmaster, and nodded assent.

“Two weeks from to-night, then, at Millwood,” he reiterated, as they began to depart for their several quarters; “and forget not our league; for if you do, slavery is your lot, and justly too, forever and ever.”

“No, mass’r,” answered all; and ere long, the old hovel was as silent as the grave. Abe rested easier that night, and Uncle Tom was in ecstasy.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SURPRISE.

“We ’ll meet it
As men whose triumph is not in success,
But who can make their own minds all in all
Equal to every fortune.”

We are now to return to that part of our story where we left Mr. Erskine and the family on the piazza of the mansion, enjoying the cool of the evening. He was to set out the following morning for Winchester, to attend the assize, and Pompey had received directions to accompany him. He so informed Mr. Bates, when the latter suggested the purchase of more school books; but as the same were needed for immediate use, and Mr. Erskine probably would be detained for several days, Uncle Tom was dispatched instead, as already mentioned.

During his stay at court, it so happened that, one day, Mr. Erskine fell in company with the bookseller; and in the course of the conversation, he observed to the bookseller, that his young slaves were making rapid progress in acquiring the rudiments of education.

“I have not much faith in your plan,” replied the bookseller.

“Whether they will recollect the teachings of the schoolmaster, is more than I can undertake to say ; but I do not understand why their memory is not to be regarded as reliable in this particular as in the recollection of the duties which they are taught to perform, day after day.”

“They will not be troubled so much to *remember* as to *learn*. They can not bring their minds to the subject ; that is the trouble, sir ; their brains are too light ; too fond of play and frolic—too facile : light-headed race, sir—not designed for education.”

“Oh ! but I know, already, that you are mistaken in that opinion. They appear to learn rapidly—very rapidly. Why, sir, it was only a day or two since, you know, that I was under the necessity of getting from you a fresh instalment of books ; the first supply being disposed of—entirely learned by the little fellows—and, so that no time be lost, it was necessary to buy more books without delay.”

“I was not aware of that circumstance, sir.”

“Not aware of it !”

“No, sir.”

“Ah ! you were not in your store when my slave, Tom, got the last batch.”

“I was at home, sir, when your Tom called, the other day, certainly ; but he received no new books, sir,” said the bookseller, regretting that he had missed a sale to the planter.

“What ! Tom received no new books ! Why, there

is a mistake somewhere in this matter," said the planter, with an expression of great surprise in his countenance.

"No, sir; Tom got no books."

"The devil! You are forgetful—very forgetful. Why, sir, Tom brought home a receipt for the same; and what is more, I believe I have it now in my pocket-book," said the planter, and he looked over his papers for the receipt which the slave gave to him at the mansion, upon his return from Winchester. "There, sir—there is your receipt for the payment of the last parcel which you sold me," added the planter, handing the paper to the bookseller; "read it, sir, if you please."

"Yes, sir; this is my handwriting; I recollect the circumstance. It runs as follows: 'Received of Mr. Bates, the grammarian, ten 50–100 dollars, in full for account, per the hand of Mr. Erskine, planter, near Millwood. Thos. Ewbank.' All right."

"To be sure it is all right, Mr. Ewbank. I knew you would recollect Tom's getting the books."

"You are under a misapprehension, Mr. Erskine; Tom got no new books. The money was received by me, to square an old account against Mr. Bates. It had been running several months."

"No new books! to square an *old account* against Mr. Bates, my schoolmaster! The devil! Well, this *is* a misapprehension. Inexplicable—it is really inexplicable. I confess, I am surprised. And Tom got no new books, d' ye say?"

"No, sir, he got no new books. He merely called

into the store, handed to me the money, I wrote him the receipt, he took it—that was all.”

“Not a word ’bout new books?”

“No, sir; not a lisp, that I heard, about any more books.”

“Why, did he not have a line, or verbal message, from Mr. Bates to you, sir?”

“Ah! I remember; he handed me a note from Mr. Bates, to the effect, I think, that enclosed *was the money*, and requesting me to give a voucher therefor. Of course, sir, I applied the money as I understood it; and I could understand its application in no other sense, for he had repeatedly promised to liquidate the account, and I was expecting its receipt daily,” replied Mr. Ewbank, for the purpose of removing all suspicion from the mind of the planter, that he had intentionally and without authority appropriated the money to the credit of the schoolmaster; for it was evident to his mind, that the planter had been deceived, in some way, either by Mr. Bates, the schoolmaster, or the slave, Tom.

“It is a very remarkable transaction. I repeat, I do not understand it. I was told that my little blacks needed more books. I was glad to hear so; for I supposed that they were taking hold of their books, and that my plan would be successful. You are sure that Tom got no more books?”

“Certainly, sir. He did not make any purchase.”

“Then I must ask an explanation of Mr. Bates, as soon as I return home. I can not, though, harbor the thought that he has purposely practiced this deception

on me. But I must know," said the planter; and parting company with the bookseller, sallied forth into the street, wondering that Mr. Bates should be disposed to practice deception. He felt chagrined — mortified, that he should be thus hoodwinked. And then, he did not know how much he had been cheated about the improvement of the children. He was flattering himself upon the success of his plan; he had confidence in the integrity and capacity of the schoolmaster. It was a wonder, therefore, that Mr. Bates should be inclined to use duplicity. But *how* the cheat, if there had been any, was played off, was the greatest enigma. He *rather* thought, after all, that Tom was the rogue; and that, perhaps, he had got "his feelings" once more. However, he should go home again the next day, and then he would solve the riddle.

"Massa, I think dat Uncle Tom was here last night an' yesterday," said Pompey, accosting Mr. Erskine, as he came into his room at the hotel.

"Very probably, very probably; I should not be surprised now at anything I may hear about the black rogue. Did you see him, Pompey?"

"No, massa, no."

"Mistake, then, I reckon."

"No, massa, no; true. Arter more books, I 'spose."

"But, Pompey, where was he seen, and who saw him? It's strange that he should be in town, and not report himself to me."

"Sanfbo, down at de barn dar, told me so. I told him I 'sposed not, 'case I thought the nigger meant to hoax me."

“Ah! it was intended for a hoax, I have no doubt, upon reflection.”

“Dunno, dunno, massa.”

“You see him again, and satisfy yourself of the truth; and, Pompey, find out his business here.”

“Dunno how ’s I can do dat. I ax’d the nigger some particular questions, an’ he would make no answer. He know’d nothin’.”

“Well, perhaps, it was intended as a jest.”

“Oh! no, massa; no *jist*. Pompey know’d too much for dat.”

“Well, ask Sambo when Tom was here. I presume he saw the rogue when he was here after the books. And yet I would like to know that with more certainty. Do this at once, for we go home to-morrow.”

“Yes, massa.”

Pompey obeyed the command of his master, but the information that he obtained was not satisfactory. Sambo was ignorant as a dolt.

Arrived home at the plantation, Mr. Erskine, as soon as convenience would permit, plainly informed Mr. Bates of his discovery, and requested an explanation. It was readily given, and so artlessly, that the planter was disarmed of all suspicion of chicanery, and his confidence in the purity of the schoolmaster’s motives remained unshaken. The explanation resulted in the conviction that the misappropriation of the money was *all* a blunder of Tom’s, and he was reprimanded accordingly. Tom, in fact, in this matter, acted in good faith. For the schoolmaster gave him a *line* to the bookseller, and, as he could not read, the

contents were "all Greek" to him, and it is charitable to suppose that he executed the errand at the bookstore with intended correctness. He had other business to transact with Abe, the hostler, and meant to cheat his master in that. And whether he had been to Winchester since, Mr. Erskine, after the explanation of the schoolmaster, evinced no desire to know. Tom had made a blunder; and the schoolmaster, mortified at the occurrence, ashamed to admit his indebtedness, and with no money then at his command, to reimburse the planter, determined to make the most of it, and get on at the school with the books which he had on hand, for the present. At least, such was the explanation to Mr. Erskine, who was right glad to hear it. For he wanted the schoolmaster to be able to explain; he did not wish his generous confidence abused; he did not wish to believe that the schoolmaster would abuse it; and he was truly rejoiced to learn that it was *not* abused. He was happy, on the whole, that he had been of service to the schoolmaster, and his disposition was ready for a similar kindness at any time. He was more hoodwinked than ever.

It had been the custom of Mr. Erskine, for many years, to reward his slaves according to the service which they rendered. It was paid to them, either in money or clothing, or such articles of merchandise as might be useful. And although it may appear strange, nevertheless true it is, that each cabin of blacks had its head, the same as a white family at the North; and for all ordinary purposes, the head negro regarded everything appertaining to the cabin as his own.

property, and used it with all that feeling of importance which such an estimate of his position would naturally create. From the stipend periodically paid to him, the slave, now and then, would save enough, after payment of his sundry little expenses, to redeem himself from his bondage ; and if our memory serves us correctly, it had so happened that, during a quarter of a century, several of Mr. Erskine's blacks had purchased their freedom. He, and his father before him, found it to redound to their interest, to hold out to the slaves the hope of reward. The slaves were more faithful generally, and performed their labor with greater promptitude.

The next evening after his return from Winchester, Mr. Erskine was conversing with the overseer relative to the condition of the crops growing upon the plantation. The backwardness of the spring retarded the work, yet the despatch with which it had been performed at the earliest opportunity, and the genial weather consequent, after all, contributed in the month of June to make everything as forward as if the winter had left the valley at its usual time. The planter was pleased ; indeed, more pleased than if the season had opened at its wonted period.

" I think you intimated to me," said he to the overseer, " that Hector's stipend ought to be increased."

" Such is my opinion, sir ; the policy would be good."

" Why not also to Cæsar and Jeff'?"

" If to them, it might do harm, unless you extended it further. The others might be jealous, and lazier in consequence of it. It would not do, I fancy, sir."

“Are they now well supplied?”

“Oh! yes, sir; very well indeed.”

“With all that is necessary?”

“Undoubtedly, sir. They are healthy, have plenty to eat, and abundance of clothes. I heard Cæsar — yes, Cæsar — tell some of them, the other day, that he had enough to last him for a year.”

“How is it with the children?”

“Well cared for, sir; in first-best rig. Better than the whites where I come from.”

“I noticed, when at the quarters to-day, that Dinah and Philisee looked more cleanly about their cabins, both inside and out, than I have seen them for many a day; it seemed to me that they were getting ambitious.”

“Oh! it is all in good trim down there; and they took more pains to whitewash. The truth is, they talk and act as if it was all theirs; and it is a happy idea for them to have, even if *it is* fancy with them.”

“Well, I have concluded to increase the stipend one-third, until harvest is over.”

“One-third, sir?”

“Yes, ONE-THIRD.”

“It will absolutely surprise the niggers. Too much, sir — too much for their own good. I would say one-fourth, and try that figure for awhile.”

“Why, I shall do them much good, and myself no harm.”

“But, one-fourth, sir, I beg leave to name.”

“Why that particular sum?”

“For no reason. I say one-fourth because you name one-third ; it is better to raise a little than to fall off, or even to stand at the same figure.”

“Oh ! very good ; let it be one-fourth, then ; and I wish you would communicate this news at the quarters ; say that the time will commence next Monday, and be observed until altered, after notice to them.”

“Yes, sir ; and glorious good merriment will they have over the announcement.”

The overseer, it is needless to add, was astonished at the generosity of Mr. Erskine. He knew him to be a man of noble impulses, and possessed of a heart full of warm blood. But this unexpected favor to the slaves raised him higher in the estimation of the overseer.

The next day was Saturday ; and in the evening the overseer walked down to the quarters. He expected to find the slaves in a frolic, and was not disappointed. Jeff was at the height of his ambition, using his fiddle and bow with uncommon agility. It can not be said that the music was more melodious ; and, indeed, the tones which the instrument made indicated that rosin was scarce, or else the fiddler was in so great a hurry that he could not consent to stop long enough to draw it across the bow. He had contrived to elevate himself on a pedestal, sufficiently high to enable him to overlook the whole company — bringing an old salt barrel into requisition for that purpose. He entered more into the spirit of the merriment than was his habit. His head inclined to the right, and then to the left — oscillating like a pendulum. Neither were his eyes

partly shut, as was his wont; but were distended wide open, and fairly sparkled with their brilliancy. His whole soul was brimfull of the sport, and his frolicking companions danced more to the time beaten by his right foot, than to the cadence of the fiddle.

Cæsar and Hector was there, at the tip-top of fun. Philisee, Hector's wife, was there; and she danced, and sung, and laughed, and fairly scraped the floor with her long feet—which, by the way, protruded so far in the rear of her ankle joints that they lost their resemblance to other feet of the human kind, and could not with propriety be called by that name in its ordinary acceptation—we do say that she shuffled so rapidly, and come down so hard, that the jig or reel which was on the tapis when the overseer arrived, terminated in a contest between her and Jeff—whether the former could dance as fast as the latter could fiddle; which bet could not be decided, for both stopped at the same instant precisely.

“Wha' stop for, Jeff?” cried out the negress, almost out of breath, “rosin up, an' at um agin.”

“Golly, Phili!” said Jeff, “hold um up—hold um to take breath; golly! you almost too much for this nigger,” wiping away the perspiration from his forehead and face.

“Rosin up agin, ole nigger! The spirit is on me,” she replied, and began to shuffle her feet again, singing a ditty to keep time by. The others joined her, and the company were, in a jiff, under full headway. Jeff could not remain idle on such an occasion, and the old violin rang forth sonorous notes, so loud and thrilling

that the negroes themselves were taken all aback, and stopped of a sudden in amazement.

“Wha’ all ’bout dar?” yelled the fiddler, “neber do for you niggers to run dis ole music-maker off de track. Up an’ at it agin,” he added, and drew the bow swifter than before.

Hector was not to be beaten at the dance, any more than in the cornfield; and he at once settled himself into an old fashioned *Virginia reel*, and the way he made the dust fly that had lain between the cracks of the floor-boards for years, was perfectly astonishing to his laughing, giggling, jolly, *roistering* companions.

“Lay it — lay it on, Jeff,” said Cæsar, who was enjoying the scene at the heighth of delight, “gib it good. Spur up your ole grinder: draw um tight.”

“Neber tire — neber tire um,
Fi-yi-ya, it te oot te doodle dum,”

said and sung the fiddler; and so Hector jumped, shuffled, stamped, and “*pirouetted*,” for full five minutes after the rosin gave out; then, for some reason that was not quite apparent to the lookers-on, he stopped and looked around in amazement.

“Yas, ole feller gib um up!” he exclaimed. “D’ ye? Ha! ha! hum! I can jig you to next week, if you mind to come!” he added, kicking up his heels. “Gib us some more. Here, Pompey, fetch on Lucinda, an’ you, Philisee — wha’, out of de ring! Ha, ha, *haw* — hst! hst! come, you dark copper skin, gib us your hand. Jehu jehinminy! Well, dance agin the sun, moon, and stars of night! Strike up your ole music,

hoss, dar! an' Philisee an' dis ole nigger will shin um into week arter last!" said Hector, and pulling Philisee into the proper position, they commenced to trip the "light fantastic toe," preparatory to another *scrub* race with the violin.

"You don't cotch um agin," said Jeff, shaking his head. "No, no, no; enough of it. Take your partners all 'round, an' I 'll make my ole hoss gib you some lubly music."

"Wha' dat?"

"No more joggling; steady um now: dance to time, and do n't git ahead. It puts um out. Steady."

"Berry good: rosin up slow, an' take your time, now ole hoss," said Hector, and danced at "all fours," the company humming—

"O what lubly eyes hab she,
Dey always shine so clearly —
She says she lubs no nig but me,
An' me she lubs sincerely.

The lubly gal libs in our town,
An' all you niggers knows her;
Her teeth aint black, her complexion brown,
Her name am lubly Rosa."

"Gemmen," said the overseer after they had enjoyed this long enough to satisfy any reasonable mind, "I have something important to communicate, if you will only listen to me."

"Sa?" said Jeff.

"Stop, and I will tell you some good news."

"Yas, mass'r."

“Your stipend is raised one-fourth, until notice to the contrary.”

“One-fourth!” they all exclaimed.

“Yes, *one-fourth*. Mr. Erskine so orders me, and I am glad to give you the information.”

“Good massa — good massa!”

“The time commences running next Monday. So find no fault hereafter, if you do your duty.”

“Good massa—good massa!” all again exclaimed, their faces beaming with exultation. Uncle Tom came in just in season to hear the intelligence. He did not relish it. He was fearful of the effect it might have upon the league, which was uppermost in his mind, and “his all in all.” And the overseer had hardly concluded when he told Dinah that it was time for them to go to the cabin.

“No, no, Tom; I ’m gwine to see Philisee an’ Hector reel off once more—they do it so nicely. Tom, what d ’ye say?”

“Dunno, Dinah,” he answered very cheerlessly, “dunno.”

“Wha’, Tom, out of sorts agin? Pshaw! do n’t hang your head so: come, you an’ Dinah shall have a jig together.”

“No, Dinah, I ’m too old for dat. I ’m gwine to the cabin. Come with me,” said Uncle Tom sharply, and, like an affectionate and dutiful wife, Dinah observed the wish of her husband, and they withdrew to the cabin,—the one melancholy from anticipated disappointment, and the other miserable in consequence, as any loving wife would be.

Not so with the others. Hilarity with them struck on a higher key. Their very souls leaped with joy: their hearts abounded with gratitude; and various were the expressions of thanks for this surprise. Unconscious of deserving this increased favor of their master, they imputed it entirely to a warm, lofty generosity; and the chain which held them to the plantation appeared in a different aspect. They forgot bondage, and enjoyed freedom *there*. If our reader had passed along the highway, which skirted the green, *he* would have been surprised, also, to see how jovial they passed the hour; and, perhaps, would have wondered at that matchless and enduring order of Providence which dispenses, in its wisdom, favors to mankind, most curiously graduated to all lots, minds, inclinations, and dispositions. And if he *was* a philanthropist, those chords of sympathy which permeate the heart of *such* a being, would have been attuned by this unexpected revelation of one of the happy phases in the life of the slave; and involuntarily he would have joined in the chorus, as Hector and his jolly companions danced to the music, which, time and again for years, had made the hills and dells of Virginia vocal with its merry notes.

CHAPTER X.

INDEPENDENCE DAY.

“Let India boast her groves, nor envy we,
The weeping amber and the balmy tree.”

On the day following the increase of the wages, Mr. Bates, it being Sunday, went down to the river to bathe. He unexpectedly met Uncle Tom in the lane, with a downcast look. He spoke to the slave familiarly, who, although he stopped, did not seem inclined to talk. He was cross, and ill humor stood out in bold relief upon his countenance.

“Nothing of importance has happened to you?” half inquired the schoolmaster, fearful that something had gone wrong in their league, and rather preferring not to hear it, though he would not wish to remain in ignorance.

“Dunno, mass’r.”

“You do n’t know?”

The slave shook his head, and was proceeding forward.



INDEPENDENT PAY.

"But stop, Tom. I am suspicious that there is something out of sorts. Tell me," again asked the schoolmaster, beginning to be anxious, lest the desire for freedom was abating.

"Lor, mass'r, I 'm afeerd dat we am blow'd up."

"Pray let me know."

"The niggers are recanting!"

"Recanting! recanting, Tom? It can not be. It was too solemnly agreed to stand together."

"Dat rascal of a Hector is playing de devil wid um. He 's traitor."

"What is it you say? Has he divulged the secret to Mr. Erskine? Tell me, Tom."

"Dunno, mass'r."

"Oh! but you do know, Tom. Out with it. I see you have something on your mind. It is always best for friends to be free to each other."

"Wages are more, an' de niggers are loud in their praise of massa. Do n't want to go North, I 'm afeerd," replied the slave, and he proceeded to give the schoolmaster all the particulars.

Mr. Bates was alarmed. The secret might get out, and then, what would become of him? He hurried to the water, and as soon as he had finished his ablution, he repaired to the mansion. He met Mr. Erskine in the lawn, and stopped to converse with him. There was no indication of any change in his sentiments toward the schoolmaster. Cordial and familiar as ever—so much so that Mr. Bates' mind was somewhat relieved. He concluded that the league was known only to those engaged in it, and that, if he

availed himself of the first opportunity to paint anew the miraculous glories of freedom to the slaves, it would all go right again. He went to his chamber, and looked over toward the quarters, but saw none of the blacks, except some of the children on the green. He was uneasy and restless, notwithstanding the unchanged demeanor of the planter. If satisfied in his own mind that the secret was safely kept, still, the fear of discovery haunted him; and perhaps that monitor within — sometimes called conscience — was suggesting the wrong that would be inflicted, if the plot was not exploded. He put his head out of the window, and saw Lucinda scouring knives, and, feigning to be unwell, asked for a cup of tea to be brought into the chamber.

“Is Mr. Bates sick?” asked the planter of Lucinda, as she came down the stairway.

“Yes, massa, berry sick, I tink; pain in de head,—bones ache.”

The planter immediately went up to the chamber, and proposed to send to Millwood for a physician. This the schoolmaster declined, as he thought — so he said — that he should feel better next day: especially if he could be quiet. The planter took the hint, and renewing the offer of his kind services, left the schoolmaster to himself, and directed Pompey occasionally go to the chamber.

The time for the meeting of the blacks at Abe’s barn, in Winchester, was rapidly approaching. It was now the second day of July, and on the evening of the fourth, they were to meet. And although the interval

was short, such was the anxiety of the schoolmaster to be away, that it looked long to him. He reflected upon the chances of detection, in every point of view, and finally flattered himself that it would come out safe in the end, and became more quiet. He was convalescent the next day, and was at the school as usual.

The increased stipend, in the meantime, did its work. Hector, Cæsar, and Jeff, lost the desire for change of position, and abandoned the idea of going to the State of Freedom. They neither saw nor felt the chains of slavery. They were at work, thinking of Independence on the morrow, instead of getting ready for the *stampede*.

"Is dis your last hoeing?" asked Cæsar of Uncle Tom, who lagged, and moved as if he was carrying upon his shoulders the years of Methuselah.

"Dunno, nigger."

"You cover up hills so deep, dat I'm 'sposing you 'spect it was for the last."

"Oh! get out, you saucy col'd man."

"Wha', Uncle Tom, cross—cross, you 'spects to be gwine to Winchester in de morning? I 'spects not."

"Wha' dat?"

"Dis nigger do n't make fool of himself, I can tell you. Pshaw! Talk 'bout massa! You am a dunce, Uncle Tom."

"Ho, ho, Cæsar! smooth now: all good. Well, I always 'sposed you'd stick to your word, but de school-mass'r talked dat some of you would be bought up; and it am so. You are bought up—goll darn you ole wool!"

“Stop your jaw, you ole, crazy fool. No sauce to dis nigger, or I’ll show you de way to next week, in a jiff.”

“Rail on—jaw away. It’s all you ’re good for. You aint fit for freedom. You do n’t know how to be your own mass’r. No, you do n’t: dat am a fact. I hopes you ’ll stay where you ar’, an’ be a low, dirty, good-for-nothing slave.”

“Jist remark dat agin,” said Cæsar, dropping his hoe, and raising his arm in such an attitude, that made it apparent he intended to use his fist. “Jist spoke it agin’, an’—an I ’ll gib you a lesson on manners, you lazy, bad-looking nigger.”

Cæsar was too warlike, and Uncle Tom staggered back a step or two.

“I shall not fight wid you, Cæsar. If you are determined to stay an’ die on dis plantation, so—dat’s all I ’m gwine to speak to you.”

“Yas, I go into the ground here.”

“But ’spose massa takes it into his head to sell you off, to raise money, or sich like. I calculates you be buried up somewhar else.”

“Do n’t you fret your ole soul ’bout dat. It will be time enough when dat event occurs, to meditate upon a stampede.”

“Oh, ho! you ca n’t stampede when your disposition says so. Dat’s de difference between freedom an’ slavery. If you was in de free country, you could do as you might please; but you must calculate dat you would be watched by de ole massa, whoever it might be, an’ no schoolmas’r to take your hand an’ lead you

off, as is de case now. Ah, ha! think of dat side of de picture, Cæsar."

"Pshaw! pshaw! Uncle Tom. You are always borrowing trouble; you forget dat de schoolmas'r said dat, whar dar was a will, dar was always a way."

"Oh! nigger, nigger! how am you to run into freedom, wid no one to help you? 'T is unpossible, Cæsar; now is de only chance."

"Mumbo jumbo — hobgoblins, Uncle Tom. I repeat um once more to you, dat I does not wish to be guine off from dis plantation foreber. I goes to Millwood to-morrow, to celebrate Independence."

"Did massa or overseer say you might?"

"Yes, nigger, an' I'm guine, too; we are all guine."

"Well, I shall go to Winchester, an' do jist as I agreed. If you wish to stumble, you can."

"Is Dinah guine wid you?"

"Yas, she is; an' children, too."

"Then she fibs."

"You bin talkin' to her, Cæsar?"

"I knows she lubs massa too strong for dat."

"Cæsar, I'm guine to ax you one question."

"Well, ax it, Uncle Tom."

"Have you poached dis ting to living mortal?"

"No, nor dead one either."

"Are you guine to do dat?"

"Dunno."

"Dunno! Dunno, Cæsar?"

"Dat 's jist um."

"If I 'spos'd you would do dat, I would—I would——"

"Out with it."

"Kill you! dar, you know'd my feelings now."

"You hab spoke um, Uncle Tom. Now do it, for it will be too late by an' by."

"You would be a d—d rascal den, Cæsar."

"Uncle Tom spoke sich hard word, an' den go an' pray in meetin', ha!"

"You distress me, Cæsar; you talk so."

"Dat conscience you hab got, is what does dat job; it smites you right an' left. Da's it."

"Go away—go away, Cæsar, I hates you; I hates you! from my soul, I hates you!"

"Dar's no use of talking to dis nigger—ha! haw! haw! Fireproof to all your dirty artillery—ha! haw! haw!"

"I'm off, Cæsar," said Uncle Tom, and throwing his hoe under the fence, left for his dinner. Pretty soon all left, it being *noontime*, and the overseer remarking that they need not come to the field in the afternoon.

It was twenty-four hours afterward, when Cæsar and Uncle Tom again met. The former was rigged up for celebrating, in a becoming manner, the anniversary of the nation's liberty; whilst the latter thought he was ready, "fully armed and equipped," to achieve *his own* liberty. They were both of them mounted upon horses. Uncle Tom had a large pair of saddle-bags, stuffed to the full with eatables and clothing, fastened to the saddle. Cæsar rode bareback. And although one rode in stirrups, with a good bridle and crupper, and saddle-cloth, the difference in the caparison of the

several horses was not half as striking, as the contrast in their own visage and personal conduct.

Cæsar had on a coat made *a la militaire*, with one row of small, white pewter buttons, and collar intended to stand in a perpendicular position. The main material of the garment appeared to be red flannel, with white lappels, while underneath he wore a pair of pantaloons of white jean. He had dispensed with shoes, boots, and slippers, and stockings and socks; but his head was protected from the burning sun by a high round covering, made out of stiff leather—very highly varnished—and surmounted with a red feather; there was a remnant of a cockade stitched on to this head-gear, and there hung dangling by his side a wooden sword—save the sharp end, which was tipped with tinfoil. He sat astride the horse as erect as the circumstances would admit of, and looked, and, we have no doubt, felt independent. Uncle Tom, on the contrary, wore the dress of a private citizen. His coat and pantaloons were “the worse for wear,” and as for his hat, it lacked rim and *head top*—so much so, that the motion created by the gait of the beast he rode, made it quite difficult for him to keep it above his eyes. He had on a pair of boots, it is true, but his heels came up nearly in the middle of the legs, or rather, to speak more accurately, “he wore the boots on the heels.” He crouched in the seat of the saddle, and, every now and then, would cast a furtive glance back over the road, as if he was afraid he might perceive something disagreeable to the eyes. He looked and acted anything but independent.

"I seed you, ole fellar!" halloed Cæsar to Uncle Tom, as he was riding by an inn, at which the former stopped "to water" his horse; "hold your hoss, an' I'll spoke to you."

Uncle Tom saw Cæsar before he spoke, and intended to pass without attracting his attention. But, lest the latter should halloo again, he reined up his beast to the trough, and begged the red-coat not to notice him.

"Dunno 'bout dat, Uncle Tom. I 'm no scapegoat."

"Pshaw! nigger; wha' you to do wid me? Let me go unmolested. If you meant to keep me here, you ought to have let out the secret; den you would not seed me now."

"Dunno 'bout dat either, Uncle Tom. I did n't 'spose dat you would go off alone."

"How do you know wha' you speaking of?"

"Golly! ar' de rest on um in de boat?"

"Dis nigger makes no answer."

"Golly! guine in separate roads, ha?"

"Pshaw, Cæsar! hold your tongue, an' make no outcry."

"Ah, ha! do you saw dis instrument?" pointing to his sword. "D'ye seed um, Uncle Tom?"

"Well, you ar' no officer."

"I 'm officer enough for you."

"Git out, you scapegrace."

"Wha' dat you say? No officer, ha? I'll seed to dat. You ar' my prisoner," said Cæsar, very authoritatively, and, at the same time, tapping him on the shoulder with his hand. "You ar' my prisoner; an, I

command you to touch the ground, with them feet of yours, instantly — instantly."

"I 'm dam'd if I do dat!" replied Uncle Tom, and tightening the rein of the bridle, undertook to sheer the horse from the watering place.

"Hold your hoss, you old sinner! You do n't get off in dis way; you ar' in de clutches of de law. I once more command you to lift that leg of yours over de saddle-pommel, an' touch ground, or I 'll make you. Mind your reckoning, Uncle Tom," said Cæsar, in a much louder and imperious tone of voice, and unsheathing his sword, elevated it at an angle of about forty-five degrees.

"Why, Cæsar, you guine to murder dis nigger? Unpossible!"

"You seed um, do you?" said Cæsar, holding up the sword higher than before.

"Wha' you guine to do? Be merciful!"

"Look at um. I gib you five minutes to surrender as my prisoner; and den, if you are not on de ground, I *shall* put my order into execution, according to de law."

"Cæsar, dar is my jack-knife; I gibbs um freely to you. Take de gift, an' let poor Tom go his way."

"No, sir — no, *sir*! You can't bribe me."

"Pshaw! Cæsar, take um to remember me by."

"De debbil take your gift! I 'll hab a bigger one. I takes de body; an' as for your soul, I do n't think you can hab one, an' run away from massa like a dirty thief."

"I do n't know dat de rest of them will be at de barn; if not, dis nigger is not guine off North alone. Let me go without disturbance."

“Neither do I know whether de rest of them will go off. But I knows dat *you* will not go off; dat’s certain, ole fellar. So, down. You had better look out. You seed um, Uncle Tom,” said Cæsar, brandishing his sword.

“Well, if I *must* surrender, I’ll not do it willingly,” replied the runaway; and suddenly spurring his horse with both heels, bounded away from the trough, with Cæsar after him, on a full run, and crying out “stop thief!” as loud as he could yell.

Uncle Tom’s beast was a fast traveler, and of sure foot and bottom. Its excess of speed over the animal that Cæsar rode, gradually widened the distance between them, and the fugitive was soon out of sight. Cæsar did not care about riding quite so fast, and he slackened the gait of his horse, and took the road more leisurely. Shortly before he reached the place of his destination,—which was no other than the village of Millwood—he ascended a hill, and upon attaining its summit, he descried far ahead the fugitive. Cæsar gave up the chase, and dismounting, reposed himself for awhile in the “bar-room” of another inn.

As Uncle Tom passed through the village of Millwood, he saw the people assembling in large numbers upon the common; the boys were firing their crackers; and wagons and carts, overflowing with beer, cakes, and fruit, stood upon almost every corner of the streets. The multitude—old and young, without distinction of color—seemed to be at the height of enjoyment. “The spirit of the olden time” came o’er the fugitive, and he was half-inclined to stop and

participate, as he had been wont to do, in the festivities of the occasion. His beast was fully inclined to do so; and, in a trice, Uncle Tom found himself involuntarily among his old associates, some of whom he had not seen for a year.

"Why, how d'ye do?" said a broad-nosed, gray-haired, limping old negro to him; "how hab you kept yourself, Tom, sin' I seed you last?"

"Lackaday, lackaday!"

"Wha'—wha' de matter? Tom's well, I hope. Come, off from de ole hoss, an' tie um up, over by de church. We'll hab fun enough to-day."

"I'm guine to Winchester."

"To Winchester! Wha' on arth takes you dar? Pooh! it is too late for you to go in time. Besides, you know, nobody dar. Pshaw! dis is de place. Come, I was jist buying a bottle of ginger-pop, as you rode up; make your ole beast fast, an' we will enjoy it together."

Uncle Tom shook his head, and began to make his way out of the crowd which had already gathered about him.

"You're not going to get away from here, ole fellar. I was thinking of you, Tom—I *was*, Tom—jist as I had a glimpse of you on de common. We shall miss you, if you go on. So, take my advice, an' hitch de beast at any of the posts over dar."

"I 'm thinking of freedom," said Uncle Tom, gravely.

"Exactly; and, of all places, dis is de spot for dat. The Millwood boys can't be beat."

"No, my ole friend," rejoined the fugitive, again shaking his head, and looking very solemn; "no, no; I hab business at Winchester, an' must be on the road."

"Well, drink off de ginger-pop wid me; dat you can do," replied the old negro; and handing him a tumbler running over with the foam of the beer, Uncle Tom drank hastily. The beverage was sufficiently strong to revive, after a few moments, the flagging spirits of the fugitive. He soon became more loquacious and social, and dismounting, a boy, at the suggestion of the old negro, led the horse away, and Uncle Tom soon was beset with many of his old friends, who had come to the village to indulge, unrestrained, in the frolic of Independence day.

A platform was erected near the center of the common, covered over, at the heighth of some ten feet, by an awning, upon which the immortal Declaration was to be read, and an oration pronounced. As the time appointed for these exercises drew near, the people, who were collected in small assemblages in different parts of the village, began to wend their way thither. They did not march in procession, to the music of fife and drum, but walked, scrambled, and ran, to the roar of the artillery stationed at the platform, as gun after gun was discharged, in honor of the stars and stripes which floated in the breeze above the awning.

Uncle Tom and his coterie, moved by the patriotism common to the rest of the people, made their way to the center also. A gentleman designated for the duty, read very impressively the great charter of American liberty; and he was listened to with profound attention

by the spectators. The orator succeeded him, and received the applause of the auditory; but Uncle Tom and his companions grew weary of the discourse. Whether they had patronised the wagons and carts too freely to remain, or whether it was the inaptitude of their minds to appreciate the glowing sentiments and brilliant ideas with which the oration abounded, may be problematical. At any rate, they left the platform. Cæsar, who in the meantime had arrived, happened to discover Uncle Tom as he was going across the common, and followed in the same direction. As he came up to him, he hailed him as his prisoner. To this the fugitive demurred, and his companions took his part.

“Well, if you hab made up your mind to stay wid massa, den you ’re not my prisoner,” said Cæsar, with considerable emphasis.

“Pshaw!” exclaimed the old negro. “Dat nigger,” pointing to Uncle Tom, “had a notion of guine to Winchester, to celebrate; but he gibs um up. Is not dat so, Tom?”

“Yas.”

“An’ here we ar’. Come, Cæsar, an’ join us.”

“Dat ’s it. “I ’m glad to hear him say so; an’ we will go home in company.”

As this squad reached a booth hard by, they heard the music of the fiddle and the banjo, and elbowing through the crowd, saw several enjoying the luxury of a dance. Cæsar, and some of the others, participated in the amusement, which, together with an occasional bottle of beer, made the sport very exhilarating.

After awhile, dancing became tame, and all were uproarious for a song — a good old song.

“An’ let it be one fit for to-day,” interposed Uncle Tom, “none of your common nigger songs.”

To this proposition all agreed; but who could sing such a song, was the question. There was much dallying: and Caesar swore that if some one did not commence very soon, he would sing “the whole town out of home,” himself. At this juncture, a country-looking chap, poorly clad, and of bashful appearance, and who wore a hat that had lost its form and pressure, insomuch that it came nearly over his eyes, stepped forward and volunteered his services.

“Dat ’s no nigger!” exclaimed Caesar.

“No matter for dat,” yelled one of the dancers — “if he can sing, let him do so.”

A murmur of approbation to the proposition ran through the crowd, and the songster commenced —

“Old Grime’s boy lives in our town,
A clever lad is he —
He ’s long enough, if cut in half,
To make two men like me.

He has a sort of waggish look,
And cracks a harmless jest —
His clothes are rather worse for wear,
Except his Sunday’s best.

He ’s kind and lib’ral to the poor,
That is, to Number One —
He sometimes saws a load of wood,
And piles it when he ’s done.

He 's always ready ready for a job —
When paid — whate'r you choose ;
He 's often at the colleges,
And brushes boots and shoes.

Like honest men, he pays his debts,
No fear has he of duns —
At leisure, he prefers to walk,
But when in haste, he runs.

His life was written sometime since,
And many read it through —
He makes a racket when he snores,
As other people do.

When once oppress'd, he prov'd his blood
Not covered with the yoke —
But now he sports a freeman's cap,
And when it rains, a cloak !

He 's drooped beneath a southern sky,
He 's trod the northern snows —
He 's taller by a *foot* or more,
When standing on his toes !

In church he credits all that 's said,
Whatever preachers rise —
They say he has been seen in tears,
When dust got in his eyes !

A man remarkable as this,
Must sure immortal be —
And more than all because he is
Old Grimes' posterity."

Bravos and vivas followed the concluding stanzas, as well as clapping of hands and stamping of feet. The song attracted the attention of many of the whites,

who joined in this general outburst of enthusiastic delight. It was loudly and rapturously encored. The songster was disinclined to gratify the wish of the audience; but it was so universal, and the encore was so persevered in, that he again commenced.

“Hark’ee, Uncle Tom,” said Cæsar, “dat am de schoolmaster, by golly!”

“Pooh! nigger, no sich thing. Out wid your nonsense.”

“Wha’ dat? Don’t dis nigger know’d um? Dat am mass’r Bates.”

“Well, ’spose so. Do n’t make a fool of yourself, Cæsar.”

The songster overheard the colloquy between Uncle Tom and Cæsar; and as Cæsar’s conjecture was correct, the schoolmaster, like the professional singer sometimes, upon the stage of the lyceum or play-house, cut short the song, and withdrew from the booth.

CHAPTER XI.

THE OVERSEER.

Peace ! I have sought it where it should be found,
In love — with love too, which perhaps deserved it:
And, in its stead, a heaviness of heart —
A weakness of the spirit — listless days,
And nights inexorable to sweet sleep —
Have come upon me.

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

Abe, the hostler, made his arrangements to be absent from home for several days, and was at the barn in Winchester at the time designated for the assembling of the slaves. One only made his appearance. What had occurred was a mystery. The arrangements were so minute in detail, and, as he supposed, so perfectly adjusted, that a frustration appeared out of the question. It was long after dusk before he was relieved of his ignorance. And then the relief was partial, unless the fact that the expected fugitives did not congregate at his quarters in pursuance of the league, should have been full proof in itself of an abandonment of the conspiracy to runaway. He was

inside of the barn, with the door closed. The requisite number of horses were saddled and bridled in the stalls. Anxiously did he wait, until finally the concerted signal was given outside. He speedily opened one of the doors, with the expectation of beholding a bevy of fugitives, when, to his surprise, who should walk in but Mr. Bates, "solitary and alone." The schoolmaster, desirous of communicating with the hostler in great privacy, beckoned to the slave, who had been there since the middle of the afternoon, to retire into the hayloft. Which done, Mr. Bates informed Abe, in a very low tone of voice, that in consequence of an increase of the stipend, the slaves on Mr. Erskine's plantation had modified their views on the subject of freedom, and, he was sorry to say, that the legira must be postponed to some more auspicious moment. The hostler regretted that they must take the labor for their pains, and intimated, as politely as his nature would admit of, that he would see the slaves, schoolmaster and all, in —, before he would be so fooled again. Such a sentiment was anything but agreeable to the sensitive feelings of Mr. Bates, and he begged to be excused from further conversation at that time. The hostler was too vexed to desire his presence, and each bidding the other "good night" at the same instant, the wish to be relieved of the presence of the other was perfectly mutual and satisfactory.

The schoolmaster did not reach the plantation until near noon of the next day. He excused the tardiness of his return, by saying that he remained over night with a friend at Millwood. The apology was as

unnecessary as it was false. The planter had not given his absence a thought; and, if he had done so, it would have been attributed to a proper motive.

Uncle Tom returned to his cabin the night previous, in company with Cæsar; and said to Dinah, as he was retiring to bed, that he never enjoyed Independence with better satisfaction. It was probably after midnight, before he finished his rehearsal to her of what he had drank, eaten, and seen during the day. He took good care not to disclose the purpose which he entertained when he bade her good morning, and was evidently glad that the horse was wiser than himself. The halt at the village changed his destiny, as he thought; and the wife and children, and even the cabin itself, seemed dearer to him than ever before.

The holiday over, the slaves resumed their labor as usual. As they had passed it differently, each had a fund of story for the other. To those who were at work with him, Cæsar gave a graphical description of the doings at Millwood; and among other things, he referred to the long song which the white man sung at the booth, and revealed his suspicion as to whom the person was. His auditors were incredulous. They could not believe it.

“Oh! Jeff, I know dat it was de schoolmass'r.”

“Dunno; I'm guine to consider dat.”

The schoolmaster was foiled in his effort to despoil the planters of their honestly-acquired property. Why the slaves of Mr. Erskine should secede from the league was obvious; but what influence controlled the slaves of the neighboring plantations, was beyond his

conjecture. Addicted to imaginary conceptions, and naturally prone to religiousness, he inwardly besought the Creator of heaven and earth "to make his paths straight." He was ill at ease. He paced his chamber, and as the clock struck eleven, read a chapter in the Bible, and knelt in prayer. It was the evening of the day he returned from the celebration of his country's Independence. He prayed for the enlightenment of the blacks everywhere, and especially those sojourning in the valley of the Shenandoah. He asked that the shackles might fall from the bondman and bondmaid, and the captive be speedily released from servitude. He thanked his God that he still inherited life and liberty—the matchless boon of Providence to humanity—and as his soul rose with the mighty theme, his sanguine and fragile mind caught the flickering flame, and soaring away, with the velocity of the tiny balloon, into a region of the wildest enthusiasm, he prayed for *all*—both bond and free. He had no more than done this, when, as sweet a strain of music as ever broke upon mortal ear, filled the apartment with its enchanting melody. He tried to say Amen, but his senses were enraptured; and some influence emanating, as it seemed to him, from beyond the confines of earth, stayed the organ of speech in its office. Unconsciously he reposed his body upon the bed; but that which constitutes the life of being was already traversing the alluring fields of another country—far hidden within the veil of Divinity. He dreamed, that—we had almost written—but, to state more accurately, he saw the whole human family dwelling together in a state of

unity and equality. Countless generations, extending through an almost interminable line of descent, were there; the high-born and the low-born, the king and his subject, the prince and peasant, the master and slave—all grades and conditions of earthly society and existence—all were there, in beatitude. It was indeed a heavenly sight, and the soul of the schoolmaster reveled in elysium.

It may appear cruel to break the trance; but, Uncle Tom did not play the accordeon beneath the window as a mere compliment. He came at that late hour of the night on an errand of business, not pleasure. When he finds that the sound of his instrument does not break the silence of the household, he takes courage, and noiselessly winds his way up the ascent of the stairs, and reaching the door of Mr. Bates' chamber, quietly turns it upon the hinges. He takes the liberty to approach the bed, and gently taking the hand of the sleeper into his own awakes him. The schoolmaster rises in his bed instantly, and intense astonishment fills his countenance.

"Who are you?" he asks, his eyes glaring in their sockets.

"Wha' de matter wid you, mass'r? Be quiet. It is your poor old slave."

"Ah! it is you, Tom, is it? Very good. Sit upon the bed, and let me know your thoughts. You are not here at this late hour without a purpose."

"Yas, mass'r, dat 's it. But you 'most frighten me, you look so wild. I hope dat you ar' not out wid me for not going to Winchester, mass'r."

Oh! no, no; I was in the midst of a—I know not what name to mention; the like never occurred to me before.”

“Wha’, mass’r! wha’ d’ ye say? for Lor’ de mercy! explain um.”

“I can not now; it would take too long. Let me know your business. Something new on foot, I imagine?”

“Dunno, mass’r.”

“How is that? Are you here for nothing?”

“Dis poor ole nigger could n’t sleep. I hab no peace, day or night. So I thought I would come and consult wid you, my good friend.”

“Tom, have you prayed to-night?”

“Oh! yes, mass’r. Dis nigger pray’d long, an’ wid earnest heart; but I felt no more at ease.”

“Shall I tell you the reason?”

“Yas, mass’r.”

“It is your punishment.”

“Punishment! for what, mass’r?”

“Because you loitered at Millwood.”

“I ’m not to blame for dat. De ole horse would stop, in spite of all I could say.”

“Ah! Tom, Tom. Just as if you had not the power to make the animal budge. No, no! You recognized some old faces, and you thought you would stop only for a few moments. You were urged, I’ll be bound, to stop and celebrate. You were importuned to drink and eat; and, like Eve in the garden of paradise, you thought you would just taste—no more. But you know that the preacher says, *that* ‘brought death into the world and all our woe.’”

"Dat 's it. You hab mentioned de feelings of dis nigger, jist as they was. But, mass'r, I could n't help um."

"And therefore you are now here in slavery, instead of being on the path to freedom. Tell me, Tom, did you really intend to go to Winchester, when you left the cabin that morning?"

"Yas, mass'r."

"I am afraid not. You may have had some such idea; but, I suspect, you did not feel as if you were taking your last look of the plantation, when you passed the brow of the hill. Be sincere, and tell me, now, Tom?"

"Dunno 'zactly how dat was, mass'r. I allow dat I did not like de idea of leaving forever my good ole Dinah."

"Ah! ha! I thought as much. And how was it with reference to those little children of yours?"

"Oh! mass'r, it is painful to think of it. But, as I was afeerd to tell Dinah whar' I was guine dat day, I did not bid good-bye to any one. I had sounded her about freedom; but she thought nothin' of it, an' I did not tell her 'bout de league."

"Well, pass that by. What project have you now in your head? Talk fast, and to the mark."

"I can not bear, mass'r, to stay here. I'm not contented. I want to be my own man."

"Very good; that is for you to say. If you will go to work in earnest, I doubt not you can get away."

"Will you help me as afore?"

“Certainly, certainly; my services are at your command. You ought to be free; you have lived in chains long enough. You have only to will it, and the thing is done.”

“If I could get Cæsar, or Jeff, or Hector, or any of them, to go wid me, I should be contented. I hate to go alone.”

“Can you not persuade Dinah, after all, to accompany you? Try her again.”

“Oh! if you could talk wid her as you hab wid me, she would come to it, I believe in my soul.”

“It is difficult to get an opportunity.”

“No, mass’r, no.”

“Can you arrange an interview?”

“Yas, mass’r.”

“Well, do so, and I will talk to her as man never did before. I will make an impression on her.”

“Will you, mass’r?”

“You may rely upon it, Tom.”

“Den I ’m glad dat I came over an’ waked you,” replied the slave, and rising from his seat on the bed, walked to the door, and added, “God bless you, mass’r.”

“Let me see you, Tom, to-morrow night, in the road.”

“Yas, mass’r,” he replied, and going out of the mansion as silently as he entered it, returned to his cabin.

The schoolmaster was happy to find that the seed which he had sown had not fallen entirely on barren ground. He took courage, and determined that he

would make another effort. His thoughts were more tranquil, and he soon fell asleep.

The next day, Uncle Tom went into the woods, about a mile from the quarters, for blackberries. There he fell in company with a couple of slaves, who were members of the league. One of them was about his age.

"Jim," said he, "whar was you on Independence day?"

"On our plantation."

"Jim, you ar' faithless nigger."

"I should 'spect you to make dat appear, if true."

"Easy, easy enough, Jim."

"Let dis nigger see you do um."

"Shall I, Jim?"

"So I spoke, Uncle Tom."

"Well, you ignorant nigger, I tell you why. 'Kase you did not keep your word wid Abe. Now you knows wha' I said, Jim."

"Oh! yas, yas. Well, Uncle Tom, I take. I make a clean breast of it."

"Good! out wid it."

"You must know, Uncle Tom, dat massa raised our stipend, an'—"

"Curse de stipend! dat was de trouble wid Cæsar an' de rest ob um."

"An' we thought as how we would try massa on a little longer."

"So I supposed. How much more do you get?"

"We hab got noffin yet; only de oberseer spoke dat it should be bigger."

"Jim, do you want me to put a flea in your ear?"

"Yas, if you can catch um."

"Pshaw! you misunderstand. I gib you some word of advice, if you will hear me."

"Go on; my ears are open for him."

"De stipend will neber be increased—neber. Recollect what I speak to you."

"I would like to see you make out dat, when de oberseer has expressly told us dat it should be increased?"

"When did he say dat it should be bigger?"

"Oh! now I believe dat you hab me," replied Jim, scratching his head; "I had forgot dat."

"Exactly. Rather important, I should think, to hab it commence, if you ar' to be benefited by um."

"True; I'm glad you mentioned dat circumstance to me. I shall go to Mr. Rawls, our oberseer, as soon as I git back wid my berries, and understand dat point."

"An' if it is not to be increased until arter you ar under de green turf, what den?"

"Den dis nigger will be off, as agreed."

"But, perhaps, Abe's services will not be forthcoming when you may want um."

"I'll risk dat nigger; I know'd him long time ago."

The suggestion of Uncle Tom disturbed Jim's equanimity, and as soon as he filled his pail with the berries, he started for home. He revealed his thoughts to some of his fellow-slaves, and they were as anxious as himself to know the truth. They repaired to the house of Mr. Rawls, and were disappointed in not finding

him at home. Jim, and some of the others, loitered about the door until he returned. It was near sundown.

"What is wanted?" inquired the overseer, as he came up, and apparently much surprised to see the company.

"We hab come to know 'bout de increase of our stipend," replied Jim, who, upon his own motion, acted as spokesman.

"And what do you want to know?"

"When ar' um to be increased?"

"What is that to you? It will be time enough for you to know that when you receive it," answered Mr. Rawls, in a gruff tone of voice, and jostled among them to reach the door of his house.

"Dat is unsatisfactory, mass'r," said Jim, "we want to know de particulars."

"You will know no more now from me. So get you back to your quarters, you ill-mannered scamps. It is very kind in your master to give you any, much more to increase it," replied the overseer, and entering the house, shut the door upon them.

Jim and his fellow-slaves went away with heavy hearts, and much disappointed in being treated so harshly. They at least expected their inquiries to be answered in a civil manner. If the stipend was not to be increased at any time, they thought the overseer could say so. Jim thought of Uncle Tom's suggestion, and began to believe that there was some truth in it.

"We should have stuck to the league," said Jim.

"Yas; an' de blame is all on you, for backing out."

“I thought dat massa was honest ; I neber know’d him otherwise afore.”

“I believe dat massa am honest, now.”

“How do you make um so, when he promised to gib us more wages, an’ do n’t keep his word ?”

“You may hab heard massa say so ; dis nigger has n’t, anyhow.”

“De oberseer said it ; dat ’s all de same.”

“I ’spects mass’r Rawls lied some.”

“Den, ’spose you ax massa, Sam.”

“No ; dis nigger not so green as dat. I will ax missus to-morrow.”

“Do, Sam ; an’ if de oberseer hab lied, he neber will hear de last ob it.”

Sam kept his word, and improved the first opportunity which he had to ask his mistress about the stipend.

“So, Sam, your master has always taken good care of you, has he not ?”

“Yas, missus.”

“Then, I would not give myself further uneasiness. You will always have what is proper and right, and so will your family.”

“But, missus, we had our expectations raised by de oberseer. He said as I hab told you. I could n’t believe dat massa would not keep his promises.”

“Mr. Rawls, perhaps, anticipated what he told you. As Mr. Erskine had been so kind as to increase the stipend on his plantation, perhaps Mr. Rawls thought that yours would be raised also. I presume that he

could have no motive in exciting your expectations unnecessarily."

Sam shook his head; and at night, when Jim returned from his work to the quarters, he told him what his missus said.

"Do you know what I am guine to do?" said Jim, as Sam finished the story.

"No; I does not."

"I 'm guine to make a point with mass'r Rawls."

"Wha' dat you guine to 'do?'"

"I say dat I 'm guine to make my point wid de oberseer. I 'm bound to know 'bout dis."

"Oh! dat's right, Jim. Do so; an' keep your courage good; mark dat."

"Oh! do n't you take dis nigger for a fool. I shall not let um off as easy as afore. I must know de bad part, if dar is any."

Jim was at work mowing grass, the next day after the above conversation between him and Sam. In the course of the afternoon, he was raking the new-mown hay into small cocks, so as to shed the dew and rain which might fall before it was housed in the barn. Mr. Rawls was giving some directions in relation to the size of the cocks, when Jim, believing that the opportunity was as favorable as he should have, again called the attention of the overseer to the stipend.

"Why do you dog me about that? Do you not have your wants gratified?" inquired the overseer, quite out of patience with the slave's impudence.

"Dat 's not de point, mass'r. You said some time ago dat our stipend was increased, or would be

increased. What I want to know is, when it is to begin?"

"I am not disposed to answer you; and I could not, if I was."

"Den, I understand um. It is a cheat; an' I am bound to report to massa. I'll not stand it."

"Perhaps you would like to change masters; eh? What do you say to that?"

"No danger, no danger of dat, mass'r oberseer. I'm too old—too many gray hairs."

"Perhaps not; but I can tell you one thing. If I am not greatly deceived, the crops must be larger, and the prices higher this year than usual, or some of you must go, and no mistake."

"Do you say dat, mass'r?"

"You had better believe I do, Jim."

"I did not think that massa was in straightened circumstances. But I'm opposed to lying," dryly remarked the slave.

"I understand you, you saucy puppy! I told you all that your stipend would be increased, so as to stimulate you to work the more diligently, and, perhaps, thereby save your master from the disagreeable necessity of parting with any of you. And I repeat now to you, that I have a strong impression that the stipend will be increased when your master sees his way clear."

"I did not understand you so afore, mass'r. For my part, I does n't care 'bout changing hands."

"Very good; work, then, the harder, and live the closer; for what you save is to the master's benefit, and to your own likewise, as you now, I think, understand."

"Dunno, mass'r, how dat will be. I had rather hire my own time."

"You might fare worse."

"Not in dis valley, mass'r."

"Very true. But if you should leave this plantation, there is no knowing where you might fetch up, at last."

"Is massa in debt?"

"Yes; and the day of payment is coming around."

"I can't understand it, mass'r. He lives not half so well as some oder planters," said Jim, slow to believe the overseer, after the deception which he had practiced.

"The debt is an old one—extending back to the purchase of a portion of the plantation. But it is now fast reaching its maturity, and must be promptly met, or the mortgage given to secure its payment will be foreclosed without mercy."

'Dis nigger am not acquainted wid de subject you speak on, mass'r. Dis much I will say: I shall do my part of de work, for I lub missus. But I'm not afeerd of changing owners. Too many white hairs—too many, mass'r—ha! haw! hum!" remarked the slave, good-naturedly; and plied the rake with greater zeal than usual.

Sam saw the overseer and Jim conversing together, and he concluded that the latter was making his point. He was anxious to learn the result, and as soon as he had eaten his supper, repaired to Jim's cabin.

"Well, massa is in debt," said Jim, anticipating the object of his visit.

"I reckon not much."

"De oberseer says so."

"What 'bout de stipend? dat interests dis nigger most."

"It is not increased, nor am it to be."

The large white orbs of Sam's eyes looked peculiarly at this announcement.

"How 's dat, Jim? Dis am a new feature, indeed."

"I told you already; massa is in debt, an' we must work harder, or some ob us must be sold. Come, go out wid me, an' I will tell um all."

"Agreed," replied Sam, looking most profoundly surprised; and they went into the yard.

"Here, you niggers!" shouted Jim, "come to me, an' hear something for your own good."

They flocked around him immediately, to listen to the news.

"Some of us must be sold, to help massa pay his debt, if de crops are not big!"

A peal of thunder, in a cloudless sky, could not have occasioned greater amazement.

"Wha' dat! wha' dat you mention?" quickly inquired a broad-shouldered, well-formed, robust negro, who had not seen five and twenty years.

"I spoke dat some one would be sold afore long, if massa did not pay his debt." The young negro appeared to be troubled in his mind, lest his good condition should recommend him to the purchaser. "I hope dat you will do your best dis summer," continued Jim, addressing his conversation to the black last mentioned, "for I should hate to part company wid you."

“Do n’t you mind me; do your part. It will not follow dat I ’m guine to be the sold nigger, if I am smarter than de rest of you. It will depend upon de sum to be raised, as to de price to be got. Perhaps some of de boys—dat one on de fence yonder—may do.”

“Well, dey will not take us ole ones—dat ’s sartin; for de buyer would be afeerd we should die too soon,” replied Jim, apparently believing that he was in no danger.

“I do n’t know’d dat,” said Sam; “it stands us all in hand, to lend our assistance, when missus cries for help. Dis nigger is glad dat you made your point, Jim, wid de oberseer; it ’s better to know the bad now in season. I goes in for work.”

All of them acquiesced in this sentiment, and retired to their cabins.

CHAPTER XII.

SCHOOLMASTER'S LESSONS OF FREEDOM.

"Mark well your words, sir; for you must answer for them."

BARD,

After tea, on the day succeeding his trance, Mr. Bates sauntered about the lawn, and in the fruit orchard. The sun was rapidly verging toward the cope of the western horizon, and the clouds, richly tinted with the reflection of his mellow rays, were gathering around, "as if to curtain his repose beneath their gorgeous drapery." What he beheld in the trance, had been uppermost in the mind of Mr. Bates during the whole day. And now that he was released from the duties of the schoolroom, it engrossed his entire thoughts. He believed that the slaves were to be released from their thralldom, if equality was to exist in the New Jerusalem. He was more than ever persuaded, that he was doing his Maker good service, in contributing his mite toward the liberation of the down-trodden, and their ultimate evangelization. This consideration braced his courage, and overbalanced

any misgivings which conscience, in moments of tenderness, may have occasioned. What, if the fortune of the slaveholder was wrecked! What, if poverty succeeded affluence! What, if the bondman himself sunk to a still deeper degradation, in this sphere below! What, if the Union of the States was dissolved! What, if the constitution of his country—the palladium of liberty—was scattered to the winds and waves of furious bigotry and uncontrollable fanaticism! Such dismal events might occur. But he consoled himself with the comfortable reflection, that there was an unseen power above all—a higher law—that would guide the whirlwind of popular commotion, and finally allay the elements of discord, and harmonize the beligerent interests of society.

Uncle Tom did not forget his engagement; and shortly after sunset he was in the road, awaiting the appearance of his mentor—the schoolmaster. It was sometime before he came; it was quite dark.

“Tom, you are punctual, I see.”

“Yas, mass’r.”

“What a pity that the rest of them do not prize as highly as you, manly independence—the glory of life.”

“Can’t say, mass’r, how dat am. Dis nigger is bent on guine to freedom.”

“Good pluck, my old boy! Keep your hopes centered there, and you will yet gain the victory.”

“I ’m afeerd dat time is long ways off.”

“It may be so. But remember the story of the Israelites. Rugged was the way, many the privations,

and very long the time, before that good old patriarch, Moses, stood on Pisgah's mount, and looked upon Palestine."

This admonition was too much for the negro's pious heart, and, unable to restrain himself, he sung, in a manner so exquisitely pathetic as even to move Mr. Bates to tears,

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign," &c.,

and as he was concluding the last stanza of the hymn,

"Could I but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er;
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright me from the shore,"

to which an interruption in his voice, from sorrow, gave peculiar softness, the sound of carriage wheels was heard, that, from its faintness, appeared to be some distance up the road.

The schoolmaster did not wish to be discovered in company with the slave at that hour, and they immediately climbed over the fence, and seated themselves in the shadow of a large pine log which had been felled by lightning several years.

"Mass'r Bates," said Uncle Tom, who had not yet regained his self-possession, "explain to me de difference between mounting to glory here, and in de state of freedom."

This request of the poor, old, honest negro—so naturally preferred in his present temperament—filled

the schoolmaster with amazement. He knew not what to say. He attempted an answer, but it stuck in his throat. He hung his head; he knit his forehead, as if in deep meditation.

“Ki, mass'r Bates, enty you guine to speak nothin' to me, eh?” inquired the slave, himself now also amazed, at the appearance of his friend.

The schoolmaster raised up his head, and bringing his piercing dark eyes—livid, as it seemed, with the fires of malice—to bear directly upon those of the negro, with all the intensity of which he was capable, exclaimed,

“Miserable dunce! Have you not heard, again and again, that the blasphemer cannot enter the gate of heaven?”

This was uttered in such a tone of awful solemnity, that it fairly thrilled the heart of the slave—already throbbing with the emotions of contrition—and his whole frame trembled like autumnal leaves surged by the premonitory winds of winter.

Both were silent for a few moments. Finally, the slave, recovering in some measure his equanimity, ventured to reply.

“Yas, mass'r. I ax your pardon. May-be I was too fast. But dis let me say: dat question I put to you, mass'r, was an honest question; dat's all.”

“Very good, Tom. Now, to our business. Do you think you can persuade Dinah to accompany you to the North?”

“Dunno.”

“So I supposed; I ask you what you think of it?”

"Doubtful, mass'r; berry doubtful."

"Is the chance of getting her consent, worthy of our effort?"

"Dat can be tried; an' if you say so, I will make anoder effort."

"I make the suggestion. You can have an interview with her; you must manage carefully, however, and feel your way; do not let her know too much."

"Let dis nigger alone for dat."

"Very good. How is it, Tom, with the rest of them? Is there any reason for expecting their co-operation again? Or have they gone back to their lowly condition, with no desire to leave it."

"I reckon not, mass'r; I put one of them on the scent to-day, in de blackberry bush."

"Ah! did you, my good man? Tell it to me."

"It was Jim, who libs up de valley some two miles."

"On another plantation?"

"Yas, mass'r."

"Well, what was his feeling? What did he propose to do?"

"De circumstance was dis. I know'd dat his stipend was not bigger than afore; so I takes de liberty to say dat it neber will be. He said no; dat I was mistaken. I ax'd him to inquire 'bout it; I ax'd him how much, and when it began. He could n't say; an' den I told him dat it was all cheat! He got excited, and swore dat he would know de truth from de oberseer dat berry night."

"Supposing that the stipend was not increased, what did he propose to do?"

"Dat is jist what I was guine to told you."

"I am listening, Tom."

"He said dat he would not stay wid his massa any longer."

"A sensible determination. I should like to make his acquaintance."

"Easy enough done, mass'r; easy enough."

"Explain the way, Tom."

"S'pose I git word to him, dat you would see him, an' tell him to meet you somewhar'."

"That is feasible. Can you not go up to his quarters this evening? I would like to hasten the *denouement*."

"Excuse dis nigger, mass'r, but I do n't understand what you remarked."

"I say, go up this evening and see Jim."

"Yas, mass'r; dat I understood, an' I will do so. Dat oder part of your remark, I mean."

"Oh! I meant to inform you, that I wished to know immediately the result of our consultation."

The slave bowed his assent, and climbing the fence, jumped into the road, and, with a quick but light step, went in the direction of Jim's quarters.

Mr. Bates, to avoid suspicion, extended his walk across the meadow to the river. He had misgivings about succeeding with his plan of emancipation. Uncle Tom, doubtless, was both willing and anxious to go North. But he had great affection for his wife and children; and unless some expedient was adopted to take them along also, the schoolmaster almost despaired of prevailing upon him to go without them.

Hence the desire manifested, to have the slave make another effort to gain over Dinah. He followed the bank of the river as far as the elms, musing upon a variety of projects to compass her in his toils. His mind settled upon none; and fearful that his absence from the mansion might occasion remark, he directed his course directly across the field, and upon reaching the highway, unexpectedly met Uncle Tom.

"What! back so quick?"

"Yas, mass'r; I do n't play by de roadside."

"Well, did you see Jim?"

"I seed him; but, it would n't do to tell him. For I was foxy enough to ask whar' de oberseer was — pretending to have business wid um; an' he said he did not know, 'kase he had not seen him since he come home from blackberrying."

"And then you thanked him for the information, and bid him good evening?"

"Exactly so, mass'r; was not dat right?"

"Certainly; you could do nothing else."

"What do you say now to me?"

"See him to-morrow, or as soon as you conveniently can, and inform me privately. We will not now prolong our conversation; we may be seen. That might create a muss; at least, we might have troublesome questions to answer. So, good night, Tom."

"Good night, mass'r; you can trust dis nigger."

For several days ensuing, Mr. Bates was busy in concocting schemes for the escape of Uncle Tom, and such as might be disposed to go in company. He was

slack in his duties at the schoolroom, and absent-minded. But we pass over many little incidents that occurred during this time, some of them much to his disadvantage; and ask the reader to accompany us to a little arbor, hard by a small brook—say at the distance of half a mile from the mansion—where Dinah, Philisee, and sometimes Lucinda, were in the habit of washing clothes. All three were there at the time to which we now refer.

It was before night, but after the school was closed for the day, and about a fortnight after the conversation last detailed. The negresses were busy in pounding, rubbing, and rinsing the different articles in the wash, and chatting, and cracking their jokes, and occasionally enlivening their feelings with some familiar air.

“As I live, dar comes de schoolmass’r,” said Lucinda to her companions; and dropping the shirt which she was rubbing into the tub, she stretched up her neck and took a good look at him, so as to be sure she was not mistaken.

“Sure enough, dat am mass’r Bates; bless his poor body,” replied Philisee, who, in her confusion, let drop in the dirt a lace cap of her missus, which she had nearly washed to her fancy. “Well, I does n’t blame him for wanting to stretch his limbs, arter being cramped up in dat ole log hut all dis hot day. I call dat more servile than washing—ya! ya! yah!”

“Why, girls, you have a delightful place here to do your work; a good shade and refreshing breeze,” remarked Mr. Bates, as he came up.

"Yas, mass'r; but we are old girls—seen good many years; dat we hab."

"Oh! I beg you to excuse my irreverence for age. No person respects that more than your humble servant. I hope that you will not take my observation too much to heart."

"Pooh!" exclaimed Philisee, "we are not so mighty old, arter all; young enough yet—ya! ya! yah! I'm a match for Hector any day, to work; an' you know, or you ought to know, dat he takes de lead now; Uncle Tom can't come it now—ya! ya! yah!"

"Very true; and likely that is the reason why Dinah feels so old. What do you say, Lucinda?"

"Pshaw! mass'r Bates, you knows wha' Pompey an' I am; you sees us ebery day," she bashfully replied, and resumed her work.

The schoolmaster seated himself, and entered into familiar conversation.

"If," said he, "you enjoy labor so much here, beneath a burning sun, I wonder how you would like it in the land where I come from."

"Too cold, an' wet, I reckon, for us Southern gals," said Philisee.

"Not if you were your own mistresses—to go and come as you might please, I imagine."

"I do n't know 'bout dat; we are well off—well enough—aint we, Lucinda?"

"I'spects so. Pompey says dat he would not quit massa for a hundred clean dollars!"

"I have known many a poor girl, who owned her body, and dressed as she pleased with her own earnings,

to become rich, and reside in an elegant house, filled with splendid furniture, and to dress better than your mistress, and to ride in a magnificent coach with servants at her call to execute her commands."

"Git out wid such nonsense, mass'r Bates; dar is no use of trying to fool us wid sich stories — ha! ha! haw!" said Philisee.

"You may laugh it off, but I tell you the truth. And let me add, that such occurrences are common with Northern ladies."

"Do you pretend to say, mass'r Bates," rejoined Philisee, laying aside her work, and raising one foot out of the water, and placing it upon the edge of the tub, with her right hand supporting the chin, and her elbow resting upon the knee, "do you pretend to say, mass'r Bates, dat de Northern gals work so much as dat you spoke of?"

"Oh! they do not always actually make it with their labor, Philisee. But, as there are no distinctions in our society, the humble frequently become exalted."

"You hab me dar, mass'r; I do n't know wha' you talk."

"Fie! fie! I say that the poor become rich, often, by good luck; chance favors them, and the high unite their fortunes with the low. The young girl, born in a humble cottage, and of obscure parentage, preserves her good character, is industrious, cultivates her mind as much as her condition in life will admit of, and minds her manners; she works as a menial, and occasionally complains of her hard lot; or, favored with the means of education, she earns her livelihood in

imparting knowledge to others, at the expense of her own health and comfort."

"An' neber sings, frolics, or dances, free an' easy, rough an' tumble, like us gals of ole Virginny? No, no, mass'r; gib me de rollicking life of de South! When de work is ober for de day, we sing um, dance um, an' laugh um, as happy an' gay as the chirping birds of morning."

"I suspect that depends upon taste. Besides, my observation does not justify such a position. I have seen you all sweating in the torrid sun during the day, and at evening retire to your quarters with aching bones, and your bodies absolutely exhausted with fatigue."

"Oh! mass'r, you did n't mean all dat. I do n't know how oder folks ar', but my bones ar' as whole as eber. An' as for Hector—dat charming boy—why, he always sleeps as sound as a beetle; he neber grunts—ha! ha!" said Philisee, with a remarkable pleasant smile upon her countenance.

"Will you hear me through?" asked the school-master, sharply.

"To be sure—go ahead," said Philisee, resuming the wash.

"When you interrupted me, I was about to observe that the Northern girl, although a menial or school-teacher, often, by her amenity and good reputation, won the heart of some opulent gentleman, and passed the residue of her days surrounded with the comforts and pleasures of wealth."

"Perhaps dat am so," remarked Philisee, in a tone of voice that indicated she was far from accrediting it.

“I know what I say. I could mention numerous instances to corroborate my assertion.”

“Well, mass'r, I can't say for Lucinda and Dinah, but I should feel like a cat in a strange garret. Pooh! a servant arm in arm wid her massa! bad enough to sleep wid um! but to talk of eating at same table, riding out togedder, guine to church, to hops, balls, an' parties! pshaw! git out! Philisee not fool enough for to believe all dat.”

Mr. Bates dropped the subject, and, tired of his seat upon the stone, took a recumbent posture upon the greensward. He amused himself with his cane, gazing upon the washers, and occasionally making a playful remark. The negresses wondered that he should give them his company—it was so unlike him. They were more reserved in their conversation, did their washing the sooner, and collecting their duds together, started off for the quarters.

Uncle Tom had prevailed upon Jim to come to the brook that evening. He had so informed the school-master; who, to create the impression that he was simply strolling along the road for exercise, repaired thither immediately after he closed his school in the lane. It was an hour or two yet to dusk. The women did not remain as long as he anticipated, and he was at a loss how to idle away the interval. He bethought himself of his small testament, and taking it from the pocket of his coat, opened it casually at the third chapter of Paul's epistle to the Colossians. Fond of the holy text-book, and a devoted believer in its authenticity, he willingly commenced perusing the page

before him. He read on with a placid temper, until he came to the twenty-second paragraph. Here his eyes suddenly became stationary, and his forehead ruffled; he, for some moments, looked steadily, without relaxing or contracting a muscle, as if spell-bound. Finally, he drew a long, deep sigh, indicative more of anguish of spirit than sorrow of heart, and muttered in an audible tone, "Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh,"—here the sound ceased, although his lips still moved, and instantly again he uttered, "do it heartily;" and throwing the book aside, laid himself at full length upon the ground. His eyelids gradually closed, and he continued in that position, until the night shedding her gentle dew upon the earth, began to create a chilliness in the atmosphere. Shivering, he arose, as if from slumber, and beheld Jim and Sam, who, in the meantime, had arrived at the rendezvous. He rubbed his eyes, and looking around, was surprised at the lateness of the hour.

"I do not see Tom; which of you takes his place?" he asked, with the view of ascertaining whether either of the negroes was Jim, as they were strangers to him, and Uncle Tom was still absent.

"Sam offered to go along, mass'r, an' so I took him."

"Your name is —"

"Jim, mass'r; Jim, noffin else."

"Very good. I am happy to meet you and your comrade. What do you propose?"

"Sa!"

"What brings you here?"

"Why, mass'r, Uncle Tom told, dat if I would come to de brook dis time, I should know 'bout de stipend. Sam allowed dat he would like to know'd, also, an' I ax'd him to go."

"Ah! the stipend; yes, yes — no — what of the stipend?" asked the schoolmaster, in utter ignorance of what had transpired between the negroes, and puzzled in his mind what to say or do.

"Why, de oberseer said dat our massa would increase de stipend, jist as massa Erskine did; and now he says dat he won't do it. I mentioned dis circumstance to Uncle Tom, an' he told us to come here, an' you would explain um to us. I 'spose you — you am mass'r Bates?"

"The same."

"We ar' all ears, mass'r."

"But you have mouths!"

"Sa!" exclaimed Jim, not appreciating the force of that remark.

"You blacks are often too loose in your conversation. A wise man does not tell all he knows."

"Is it a secret, mass'r?"

"Of course; or it was unnecessary for you to come here."

"Den, we will hab no mouths."

"Will you — both of you — never mention what I say to you?"

"Neber, neber, neber, mass'r Bates," replied both Jim and Sam.

"If you do — mark my words — hell will be your home!"

"Neber—neber—neber, mass'r Bates," both again replied, in a solemn voice, and quivering with affright.

"I know of but one sure way to receive wages, and that is, to be your own masters!" vehemently exclaimed the schoolmaster, with all the energy he could command. The negroes were terrified, more by the attitude which he assumed, than the idea expressed.

"Mass'r Bates, jist spoke dat agin. I won't tell um to missus," said Sam, who, of the two, retained his self-possession the best.

"You won't tell missus! Who the devil supposed you would?" replied the schoolmaster, vexed that he had even said what he had. "What a simpleton I am making of myself! Talk to strangers, and Tom not here according to appointment. No doubt a trap to circumvent me," muttered he to himself, stepping toward the brook, and stooping down, as if to quench his thirst. "I have an engagement at the mansion, and must hurry back," he said, as he rose up; "meet me some other time, here, or wherever you please, and I will talk further; now, it is inconvenient. So, good evening, and bear in mind what I observed to you."

"Yas, mass'r," replied Jim; and they went their several ways, the negroes much disappointed.





CHAPTER XIII.

UNCLE TOM AND DINAH.

“Like a bird
Singing love to its lone mate,
In the ivy bower, disconsolate.”

SHELLEY.

In the course of the evening, after Dinah returned from the wash, she remarked to Uncle Tom, that Mr. Bates came up to the brook. This was no news, for he heard Philisee tell Hector the same thing an hour before. And this was the reason why he did not keep his engagement. He thought, if he should be away from the quarters, that his absence might be attributed to the true cause. If suspicion did not “always haunt the guilty mind,” perhaps he would not have entertained such a fear. As it was, his prudence advised him to remain that evening in the cabin. If he could not aid the schoolmaster, with his presence at the brook, he might effect something with Dinah at home.

“Wha’, Dinah, schoolmass’r come to de wash !”

“Jist so, Tom.”

“ Well, when you hab put things to rights, an’ children ar’ in bed, sit down by de table an’ told me all ’bout um.”

“ Oh! dat ’s all, Tom.”

“ Yas, but you can tell ober wha’ he said. I likes, Dinah, to hear your sweet voice; will you, honey?”

“ I ’ll do nothin’ else, Tommy.”

It was not long before they were seated at the table. Dinah was knitting, and her husband was smoking his pipe. The children were fast asleep, if loud snoring can be received as evidence thereof; and the dishes and culinary utensils were all in the proper place.

“ Now, Tommy, what would you hab me talk?” she asked, as she took a seat in an old rocking chair, the arms of which, from long use, were as smooth as polished ivory.

“ I cares not. What had mass’r Bates to say?”

“ Oh! he told us ob de smart women way off in de North.”

“ Now I knows why you told me dat, Dinah; but you can’t make dis ole man jealous, anyhow.”

“ Pshaw! no sich idea entered my head, Tommy. Dat was de subject of his conversation.”

“ Oh! berry good; mention more.”

The negress was fond of her spouse, and at all times evinced a willing disposition to please him. She rehearsed the schoolmaster’s conversation with minuteness, and concluded by asking Uncle Tom what he thought of it.

“ I ’spects um true, Dinah; all true. Mass’r Bates will not lie,” he replied.

She shook her head doubtingly.

"You do n't believe him! Is dat what you would say, my lub?"

"Dunno, Tommy."

"Pshaw! what could be de object of telling falsehood? No, no! Dis nigger reckons he told you for information. Pompey says dat massa says, mass'r Bates is a gemman of knowledge. Anyhow, I would like to satisfy myself how dat am."

"Out of de question, Tommy; we can not be educated at our time o' life. Mebbe de children will grow to it."

"I was thinking as how we might sometime go to de North, an' den we could hab plenty of knowledge ourselves."

"Oh! now you speak um. As I think of it, Lucinda said Mary spoke oder day of guine to some spring way off dar. Perhaps massa would take us along."

"No danger—no danger of dat, Dinah."

"If you would drive out 'your feelings,' an' curry favor wid missus Mary, we might—"

"I know'd what you ar' 'bout to mention, Dinah."

"Take us wid um?"

"Yas. But you mistake massa on dat point."

"Oh! *you* mistake, Tommy; you think dat he will always be unkind. 'T is not so. You acted badly; I was not so blind as not to see it. De punishment was mild. It is pride—your pride, Tommy, dat play'd de mischief. Dinah was sorry; but how could she help it?"

"Neber mind—neber mind. You do not see de reason why missus Mary will not hab us wid her. Shall I speak um?"

"If it please you."

"Massa would be afeerd dat we should get our freedom, if we went into de free states.

"I do n't see through dat."

"Why, do n't you know how it is with de colored population in the North? Dey ar' all free, an' de slave, when he gets dar, is at liberty, in spite of massa."

"Tommy, would you be so naughty as to forsake Mary, if she was so good as to take us wid her?"

"Fudge, fudge! Hav n't we souls? hav n't we got brains? Nonsense, Dinah! I believe dat we ar' 'bove de brutes an' as human as de white man. Here we labor an' sweat like de ox an' horse, and we are kick'd like de dogs. There we should own ourselves—live as God intended human beings should live—be big-bugs, an' act as our own pleasure might order."

"Now you talk jist like mass'r Bates."

"An' what if I does? It is de solemn truth."

"How can you say dat, Tommy? You knows no more 'bout it than oder folks. You speak what you hear—nothin' else."

"Yas, yas; but de information comes to me in sich a way, dat I 'm not disposed to doubt its correctness."

"Who told you?"

"Eberybody dat I hear speak of it. De school-mass'r has often said so—upon his honor."

"Did you ask him, if dar was any poor people in his country?"

"A fool to ask sich a question. I knows better. How can de people be poor, when they hab all their wages for their own use!"

"You forget, I reckon, dat they hab no massa to deal out corn an' provisions, or procure their clothing. An' of this they need much, for it is cold country, not warm and sunny, like de valley of Shenandoah."

"Are you so ignorant as not to know dat de smart people do all this, an' lay up in store ebery year? It is this dat makes 'em rich an' big."

"I wonder, den, why mass'r Bates comes down here to earn his living. I should suppose that he would stay at home, in his own country, if it is what you represent. A cheat somewhar, Tommy; depend upon it."

"Hard to convince an obstinate will. You are contented wid your lot, 'case you know no better one. If you could see um as I do, you would not be willing to stay anoder moment. I tell you dat I want to try dat country."

"What! Leave Dinah an' our dear children for-eber, an' see um no more? Oh! no, no! Do n't think of sich a thing, Tommy. I could not endure it."

"If dat was what I intend to do, I should hab gone before now. I hope dat you will conclude to keep me company."

"How you talk! I'm afeerd you are getting crazy. It is impossible. And think of de indescribable misery we should suffer. Only think of our poor little children, crying for bread, an' we, Tommy, by our own foolhardiness, noffin — noffin to give them."

“We should find plenty of good friends by the way-side. I hab no fear of starvation; dat is de least of my troubles, honey. I ’m more concerned of being unable to hide ourselves from massa.”

“Impossible! it is impossible! Gib up de idea, an’ think no more of it. We could not get away. Our tracks would be too deep to cover up. We should hab de bailiff arter us—he would cotch us; for we an’ our little ones could not climb de tree like de ’possum or squirrel. We might run into de wilderness, an’ pray and pray for a hiding place; but our Father in heaven would not hear us. He would say dat we had done wrong—a great wrong—an’ dat we must repent in sackcloth and ashes ’fore he would help us. An’ den what, Tommy? We should be dragged back to massa wid our heads bowed to de ground, an’ none to pity us or help us—even wid a cup of water. Oh! our condition would be worse than de thief you read of last Sunday.”

“Now, Dinah, you are giving reins to your imagination. Dat is de dark side. Hear me. Suppose dat we hid in a cavern; an’ mass’r bailiff come an’ look all around, up in de tree, and among de rocks, an’ seed noffin, an’ heard noffin. Would n’t he go off and look somewhar’ else? of course he would. Den what, honey? You would see dat we should slip out undiscovered, an’ finding our way back to de high road, resume our journey to freedom wid light steps and joyful hearts. If we grew tired, some house would be handy to lay down in. If we were hungry, we could eat of our cornmeal and bacon.”

"It would soon be eaten up. Only small quantity could we carry, and keep our gait."

"Exactly. An' soon should we be among friends, who would give us enough to eat. No fear of hunger. By and by, we should breathe the air of the North, an' we should feel as white people do. Den, you would be ashamed dat you eber objected to guine wid your dear Tommy. Now, shall I go without you?"

"Oh! I do n't know what to think of it," rejoined Dinah, half-inclined to say yes, and yet doubting both the practicability and propriety of her husband's project. She mused a moment or two and added, "I can not bear the idea of a separation."

"Then, but say that you will join me in dis effort for freedom, an' I will do all the planning to accomplish it."

Dinah hesitated to make a reply.

"Do n't speak till your mind is fully made up; for, if we once go forward, we must not falter," said Uncle Tom, who did not wish to have his wife make her decision rashly if it was favorable to his views, for fear of consequences.

"Do you propose that we go alone?" she plaintively asked, and tears beginning to moisten her eyes.

"Pshaw! how much at heart you take it. Only think of de years of happiness that will be in store for us."

"I was thinking of my ole acquaintances here. I shall know no one there. We shall be lonely in dat strange land," she said, and gave vent to her pent-up feelings in a flood of tears.

"Perhaps not. But if you could only persuade Philisee to go wid us."

"An' Lucinda?"

"Yas; and Lucinda."

"Den I could be happy an' contented."

"Well, talk wid them to-morrow. Learn what they think of it, and be careful that you do not inform them of our disposition."

"Yas, Tommy; an' if they will go, I'm ready for the jaunt," she replied, wiping her swollen eyes with the corner of her check apron.

"Shall we sing?" asked the negro.

"Oh! no; I do not feel in de spirit; let us omit it."

"As you say, Dinah;" and they knelt in prayer, and were soon abed.

Dinah did not repose quietly. She was disturbed by bad dreams, and more than once groaned, as if suffering intense agony.

The next morning, she rose from the bed earlier than usual. She looked haggard. She went to a small looking-glass that hung upon the side of the cabin, over a little bureau, opposite the bed, and arranged her headdress.

"I feel as bad as I look, that 's certain," she exclaimed, with a sigh; "how sweetly Tom an' de children sleep," she added, as she turned around. "Well, I must try and drive away my unpleasant thoughts," she further added, as she passed out at the door into the wood-yard, for some chips to kindle the fire. Ere long, the inmates of the quarters were all astir, and she began to resume her accustomed jovial manners.

She intended to go over to the mansion, in the afternoon, and chat with Lucinda about freedom. But before she was ready to leave her work, Philisee came into the cabin. She thought it was a good time to ascertain Philisee's views, without being suspected of having any design.

"Do you s'pose mass'r Bates meant what he said at de brook yesterday?" she asked, as Philisee took a seat, to talk and sew awhile.

"'Bout northern gals, Dinah?"

"Yes."

"I reckon not. If he did, he must have taken us to be mighty weak in de head."

"Dunno 'bout dat. I 've been thinking it over. Mebbe he spoke de gospel on dat subject."

"Well, well—ya! ya! ya! who would hab thought it? You, Dinah, heeding sich nonsense—ya! ya! yah! I gib um up; color'd fools are alive yet, sure enough."

"Why, how you express yourself! Can't a body believe dat sich a gemman as mass'r Bates may tell de truth?" replied Dinah, rather pertly, vexed at Philisee's facetiousness.

"Oh! I s'pose so. I hope dat you ar' not guine to grow mad, 'kase I take de liberty of disputing mass'r Bates. Pooh! I do n't trouble myself 'bout him, if he does hang around Cassy's door."

"Wha'! what dat you say?"

"Oh! I do n't know. Pshaw! do n't like to talk all I hear," said Philisee, bringing her face in contact with the garment which lay in her lap.

"Well, really, Miss Philisee, I can't understand what you would be arter mentioning," said Dinah, drawing her spectacles down towards the tip of her nose, and dropping Uncle Tom's shirt, which she just then began to mend.

"Why, la! I s'pects mass'r Bates am a gallant, an' fond of perlite society. Dat's all."

"White people generally ar', I hab heard," said Dinah, and readjusting the spectacles, again commenced sewing, with more composure. She did not intend to question Philisee further, in relation to the schoolmaster's sentiments, thinking that it would not be of any benefit to her husband to do so. And hence, she chatted about other matters. After awhile, there was a pause in the conversation, and Philisee remarked that the colored people of the North must be a queer set, if all that she had heard was true.

"I should n't wonder if dey were a happy set. According to mass'r Bates, dey act as they please at all times, an' hab as much encouragement to do well as de white folks," said Dinah, believing that she now had a good opportunity to test Philisee's opinion of freedom.

"An' what if de color'd people are happy up dar? It does not follow dat dey are more so than we. I'll be boun' dat ole Virginny gibs more ginuin happiness than all de North put togedder."

"Philisee, how would you like to take a jaunt dar?"

"Oh! berry well."

"Perhaps you would change your opinion 'bout living dar."

"Not at all. If I could hab my freedom, I would stay wid massa; dat I would. I hab no disposition to freeze to death."

"What do you mean by freezing? Mass'r Bates says dat de sun shines dar as well as here."

"What 'bout de big snows, an' de biting frost, in their long winters? Dat 's what takes my eye. I don't care to shiver half de year, wid no green vegetables to eat, nor sweet, fresh roses to smell. No, no! I'm de gal for de warm, spicy, an' lovely South. I'm happy enough, de Lord knows, and so are you. Wha' you talkin' 'bout?"

"Mass'r Bates says dat dey are free, though; an' dat the people go an' work when it suits their disposition. They spend their own wages, an' buy property, sich as houses an' lands, an' really live as rich folks do here. How do you like dat?"

"Oh! berry well."

"Then, why not make an effort to try um?"

"Do de people hab eberyting in common up dar?"

"I 'spects not."

"Den you and I would die, afore we hab all dem nice things you mention."

"Perhaps so. But we should know what freedom was; no massa or missus would whip us, or punish us."

"I hab no massa or missus to whip me now. It is so long ago since I was punished, dat I hab forgotten it. I do my duty, an' git along well enough. So wid you, Dinah. Do you want to go off? be honest now."

"No, Philisee; I ax'd you, to know what your feelings were; dat 's all."

"Well, I hab no feeling to make a fool of myself, whether mass'r Bates wants me to do so or no," said Philisee.

"Does he want you to run off?" quickly asked Dinah, now, for the first time, the suspicion flashing across her mind, that Philisee might possibly be aware of Uncle Tom's disposition to leave his master.

"He has not insulted me so much as to put the question," she replied, and as one of her children now came into the cabin and informed her that the baby was crying, she immediately rose to go to it.

"Neither has he to me," said Dinah with a laugh, and invited her visitor to come in again when she had leisure.

Uncle Tom returned, that evening, from the field, with an ugly look.

"Blast de oberseer! he poked me in de ribs as I was coming through de bars. I'll neber go into de meadow agin," he observed, as he entered his cabin.

"Neber mind, Tommy—good day ahead. I've thought it all ober in my mind. So do not cuss eeny more," said Dinah in good humor.

"Does you say dat, my lub. Den I'll wash, an' eat my supper in peace. I always know'd you was sensible, I did."

He relished his meal, and ate with hearty good-will. Dinah was pleasant, and full of talk. They conversed with great cheer, so much so that even the children seemed to observe and enjoy it. It appeared to them like old times, when their father hardly ever sat down without fondling one or more upon his knees.

Latterly, he was rough and cold to them. They were afraid to approach him, lest they should incur his displeasure, and be ordered away, with a cuff upon the head or a box upon the ear. Now, after supper, he trotted and rocked them, played with them, sung to them, while his wife was removing the dishes from the table to the cupboard, and clearing away the earthen bowls, platters, and spoons, with which the family had partaken of their hommony and milk. It was, indeed, a reunion. The children lay down to sleep with lighter hearts and more cheerful countenances.

"Now, my lub, what hab you to say? Ar' dey guine off wid us?" said he to Dinah, as she again seated herself in the old rocking-chair, beside the table.

"Mebbe Lucinda will join us."

"What 'bout Philisee?"

"Dunno, Tommy; she am berry foolish."

"What said Lucinda?"

"It will be useless to sound her."

"What! The women are willing to remain slaves! Dis is a strange world. I s'posed, from what you said, dat de agreement to go was all arranged."

"Philisee throws cold water upon it."

"What said she?"

"Noffin."

"Noffin! ah, Dinah, you hab deceived me!" said Uncle Tom, his face relapsing into its wonted sullenness.

"You would hab me lie?"

"Oh! not dat. It grieves my spirit dat de niggers ar' so dead to freedom. Well, they can act as the will leads: my spirit says, go ahead."

"I do n't see how we can do um. We shall get no help. We will be alone. My heart recants, Tommy," said Dinah, drawing a long sigh, and leaning back in the chair.

Uncle Tom laid his pipe upon the table, scowled, and was silent.

"What you doin'?" finally said his wife.

"Meditatin'!"

"No good — better gib um up."

"Do you say dat! I did n't think, afore, dat you was fickle-minded! You should n't fooled your own dear Tommy."

"Pshaw! No sich thing. But what's de use of trying, when ebery prospect is against success?"

"Will you keep a secret, Dinah, if I told you?" said Uncle Tom, brightening up.

"Try me."

"De schoolmaster himself will help us!"

"He can do noffin but talk, an' it is all talk."

"Yas, yas; but his talk is to some purpose. He can git up a rebellion among all de color'd race; an' den we shall be so strong, we can fight our way in open daylight."

"What! an' kill massa, and missus Mary, and oberseer?"

"If we are not molested, dey will not be. We shall simply act togedder, in self-defense. Dat's all, Dinah."

"Shedding of blood! murder! Ah, dat is awful, awful! Too much to get freedom. No, no, no!"

"There it is agin! woman all ober. I say dar

would be no shootin'. Massa and oberseer would be afeerd, when dey seed our muskets, and broad-swords, and pistols. Dey would leave de road, an' let us pass on our journey to de North."

"Dunno. If oberseer shoot once, he might hit you, smack in de head. An' den wha' would be de feelin's of your own Dinah? She would curse de hour when she was born. No, no; I can not consent to be a party to sich an arrangement."

"How silly you talk. You will do noffin yourself, an' you will let no one help. I begin to think, you hab revoked your decision. I tell you once for all, I'm bound to go, dead or alive. I hate—from de bot-bottom of my heart—I hate massa; an' I'll be dam to hell if I will stay longer! Dere you hab it; you now know'd my feelin's."

Dinah knew not what to say in reply. She was astounded at the unyielding purpose of her husband. "There is something in this idea of being free that I can not comprehend," she thought to herself. She rose from the chair, and began to undress.

"Guine to bed, Dinah," inquired her husband.

"Yes, Tommy. My heart is almost broken. I got no sleep last night, and I expect none now; but I will try to rest my bones, so that I can do my labor to-morrow."

"You are too abrupt. I wish to converse wid you; come, sit down agin, an' hear me through."

She complied with his request.

"You love massa?" he said.

"Yes, Tommy, I'm not ashamed to acknowledge dat."

"You love missus Mary?"

"She bowed her head.

"Do they love you?"

"I s'pose so. Why ax de question?"

"Berry well. Be quiet till I explain to you. What do you think of me?"

"Of you, my own dear Tommy? Why, of all de world, der is none like you. You fill my heart."

"An' does he love you?"

"If I did not know so, I would die next minute."

"Den de upshot of de matter is, dat you love massa and missus, an' you *s'pose* they love you. You also love your own Tom, but you *know* he 'eiprocates de affection. Now, whom do you prefer to serve? dat 's de question. You must make your choice. I repeat, I 'm guine to the land of freedom and happiness."

"If you put it on dat ground, I am not at a loss how to answer," she replied, straightening up in the chair, and looking her husband full in the face.

"Den, what do you say?"

"Dar is my hand," she said, proffering it to her husband. "I go wid you, an' may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I attempt to unsay it."

"Now, you act like Dinah herself."

"I shall not play de fool longer; I 'm ready to act."

"As we are both now determined what to do, we must put our heads togedder, keep dark, and plan how to make our escape."

"We must not talk it at de quarters."

"Perhaps some of them will think more favorably, if it is known dat you approve of my project."

“No, no. Don’t flatter yourself: they do not appreciate how it is to be free of our yoke. We shall only run de risk of exposing ourselves. Let de foolish people alone.”

“Jeff, I s’pects, would join us, if he was sure of guine off without mishap.”

“He is your worst enemy. Be careful what you say to dat ole nigger. He would betray you into the hands of de Philistines, for a glass of grog.”

“Berry good, Dinah. As you say, so be it. We will undress, an’ sleep in quiet; in a day or two, we will make our arrangements.” So saying, Uncle Tom pulled off his clothes, and the couple were soon abed and asleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

MIDNIGHT MEETING OF SCHOOLMASTER, UNCLE TOM, AND
DINAH.

Eight and forty hours had elapsed since Mr. Bates returned from the brook. His interview with the blacks was unsatisfactory; he was disappointed in not meeting Uncle Tom. He was fearful that ill luck had befallen them, and his mind was restless. He was shy of the planter; and on each day after he came from the lane, he heard the young gentlemen recite their lessons as rapidly as the subject would admit of, and then shut himself up in the chamber, under pretence of being engaged in study. In one sense, this was true. He was engaged in study; but it was one of a different nature from what might have been supposed by his employer, if he had thought of the seclusion of the schoolmaster. Mr. Bates fancied that he was doing God service, and calmed conscience with the suggestion that he was doing evil that good might come. Anxious to know the "state of affairs," he left the chamber; and, after looking into the kitchen, and

requesting Lucinda, who was idling away the hour with Pompey, to carry up to his room some warm water, he slipped over to the cabin.

It was after the hour of nine, by the wooden clock that hung in the corner. Uncle Tom was reading aloud to Dinah.

"Ah! my visit is inopportune. I merely called to bid you good night," he remarked — ignorant of what had passed between the two slaves, during the past two days.

"Oh, not at all, mass'r. Walk in. I omitted de reading, last night, an' was bringing up now. Dat's all. Be seated," said Uncle Tom, and rising, helped Mr. Bates to a chair.

A large candle, made of tallow and beeswax, and stuck in an old iron candlestick, stood upon the table, and lighted the room very well.

"You do not, usually, remain out of bed after dark, Dinah?" remarked the schoolmaster, as he seated himself by the table.

"Sometimes; jist as I take a fancy."

"Massa, I suspect, can illy afford you the luxury of a light," said he, with a sneer.

"Oh, la! always, mass'r Bates, when we want um," she replied.

"We shall not want um much longer," remarked Uncle Tom.

"Hush! Why, man, what you ——" exclaimed the schoolmaster.

"Oh, do n't be afeerd. Dinah am one of us — ya! ya! yah!" rejoined Uncle Tom.

Mr. Bates was agreeably surprised. He felt more at home, and regarded Dinah's conversion as an omen of success. He learned why Uncle Tom was not at the brook, and was happy that the secret was safe. It amused Dinah to think that her husband remained by her side, lest his absence should make her suspicious; and he thanked his stars that he stayed at quarters to win her over to his project.

The schoolmaster was satisfied that all was right yet, and was glad that he had the forethought thus to relieve his mind of anxiety. Uncle Tom relit his pipe, and drew his chair up to the table. He invited his guest to join in "the smoke."

"De bowl is large, an' de stem am newly burn'd in de fire," said he as an inducement to accept the hospitality; but the schoolmaster declined, and drawing a cigar out of a leathern case, puffed away at that.

Dinah worked hard that day to get things in readiness for a remove. She looked demurely; but more from fatigue than by reason of any sensation of fear, or consciousness of doing wrong. She leaned her head back on the chair, and with difficulty kept herself awake. As it was, she dozed, and ere long was fast asleep. Her husband and the schoolmaster continued to smoke and talk.

"If they will not join us," said the latter, referring to the other slaves on the plantation, "then you and your own family can go with me, and we will leave them to their hapless fate."

"Mebbe, when I writes to um —"

"You write to them! why, man, you know not how to do that!"

"Dis nigger will learn dat accomplishment when he is free. Can I not, mass'r?"

"Ah! very true," said the schoolmaster. "I recollect, I told him so," he added to himself. "Yes, Tom, you can write to them how happily you are off, and tell them the way to come," he further said, mortified that a point so important escaped his recollection at such a critical time. The truth was, he had assigned so many good reasons to the slave in favor of freedom, it ought to create no surprise if some of them were occasionally out of his mind.

"Mebbe, den, if I writes to um arter I'm free, de niggers will come forward an' join me."

"Upon that subject it is not worth our while to speculate. We should now apply our minds to the means you are to use to make your own escape. I am satisfied that you are bent upon it, and will not act like a coward.

"No, sir—*no sir*. If de bailiff takes my body, it will be at the point of de bayonet. I am bound to go, dead or alive. So, mass'r, dere 's no use talkin' to dis nigger 'bout fear."

"Very good. Now, imprimis, when do you propose to start?"

"Please, mass'r, talk familiar to dis nigger. I do n't know your big word."

"First, let me understand if you have fixed upon the day of departure."

"Dunno, when Dinah an' children will be ready."

“She has fallen asleep. Wake her; for the quicker you are on the wing, in my opinion, the better.”

The slave jogged his wife.

“Come, Dinah, open your eyes. It is ill-manners to sleep when you have company.”

She started up, and looked wildly; for she was dreaming, and not very pleasantly, when disturbed. She seemed to be at a loss as to where she was. A moment's gaze, however, dispelled the illusion, and she was again at ease.

“I was saying to your husband, that we must bring this project of escape to a crisis; and the first thing to determine, was the time when we shall leave the valley. When can you be ready, Dinah?”

“As soon as Tommy.”

“Let me see—how many children have you?”

“Three, not grown up.”

“And the youngest is—how old?”

“Not quite two years.”

“The eldest can walk—all day?”

“I s'pose so.”

“How old?”

“Oh, I reckon as much as nine years. We lost de one afore him—bless her poor soul!”

“Three children! and the eldest not nine years of age! They can not endure a long journey, over-land. Their little bodies will soon ache, if they are compelled to go on foot. And as for riding, that is out of the question, I fear, for the first hundred miles.”

“That am not Tommy's calculation mass'r.

“ Well, if he can plan so as to avoid the march, it is very desirable. What say you, Tom ? ”

“ I s'pects dat Abe will furnish a conveyance. An' Jim will help us on to Winchester.”

“ Have you seen him ? ”

“ No, mass'r.”

“ Then you may consider his aid uncertain.”

“ Dunno, mass'r, but I reckon not.”

“ You did not see him on Independence day ; I did, Tom.”

“ A good friend to de slave. He will lend a helping hand.”

“ Before that time. But he thinks that he was then duped ; and he swore to me, he should not be gammoned again.”

“ I can explain de mishap to his satisfaction.”

“ You will find it necessary to do that, or you will lean on a broken reed, if you expect assistance from him.”

“ Mass'r, you know'd more than I do, ginerally, but Tom is ahead of you dis time. Abe an' myself hab know'd de oder, from de day we war as high as dis table.”

“ You misjudge him now. Shall I repeat what he said to me ? ”

“ Yes, mass'r, if you please.”

“ He said that he would see the slaves rot in perdition, before he again exposed his life gratuitously. A strong expression.”

“ Oh, that was kase we disappointed him.”

“ If you still have confidence in his integrity, see

him, and frankly explain the failure. Perhaps he will hear you ; I could not command his attention."

"What is all dis talk?" inquired Dinah, who silently listened, and could not comprehend its import.

"Noffin, noffin," said Tom.

"Dar is something, though, tell me."

"I say, Dinah, it am noffin. Do n't speak 'bout dat do n't concern you."

"Now I know'd dar was something, or you would not gib me such a look. Explain um!"

"Oh! a small matter between Tom and myself; of no particular consequence," said the schoolmaster, perceiving that Dinah was disposed to be importunate.

"I shall be ready de first opportunity, mass'r."

"Are you well provided with clothing?"

"Plenty to last till we git dar."

"Is that all?"

"Why, dat am all Tommy mentioned."

"Oh! you should collect together as many as you can find, and ask your master for more."

"Is there not an abundance in de North?"

"Certainly; but you must remember that they do not come of themselves."

"What was you talkin'?" inquired Dinah, who had risen from the table, to see that the door was fastened.

"That is right—we want no intruders. Is the latch-string pulled in, and the latch itself in the proper place?"

"No danger of eavesdroppers now, mass'r."

"Hist—hist!" whispered her husband, "I heard footsteps."

They listened. No noise, except that of the cricket in the fireplace, greeted their ears.

"Imagination, Tom ; the grave is not more silent," said the schoolmaster.

Dinah gave a shudder.

"Wha'—what de trouble?" asked her husband, perceiving it. "Are you afeerd of your shadow? or am you to hab de ague? Ginger an' pepper! you must not wince so quick."

"Mass'r, do n't speak of de grave!"

"Ah! association of ideas; perhaps thinking of your little daughter, entombed in her narrow house."

"Oh! mass'r, if I should speak all I know'd, you would, I reckon, tremble also."

"A ghost appeared to you, Dinah?"

"Oh! worse than dat, mass'r—worse than dat!"

"I am apprehensive your wife is getting wild, Tom. We must confer together elsewhere; she will reveal all, in her frenzy. Though this is an admirable opportunity, and we should hurry, yet it is risky to trust a woman—especially a romantic one," said the schoolmaster, in so low a tone, that the person to whom the remark was addressed scarcely understood it—much less Dinah, who again had gone to the door.

"Shall I tell you, mass'r? The latch is tight, an' de debbil will not appear, so long as de candle burns," she remarked, as she returned to the table.

"If you will promise not to frighten us."

"Can't say as to dat, mass'r; I shall tell de truth, strike whar' it may."

"You delay us in planning."

"I reckon not. It will help us on."

"Proceed; but be brief."

"You must know, den, mass'r, dat, de oder night, I went to bed wid my feelins' on. Shortly arter, I was buried up in de ground."

"Tush! hobgoblin story, as I supposed. I can imagine the rest."

"I heard a noise—such as the river makes when de water pours over the falls, up by big bend. I thought it was not far off, an' dat perhaps the dirt would be washed off, so I could git out. All was darkness; I could see noffin. I lay still, expectin' ebry moment to feel de cloven foot. All at once—in de twinklin of an eye—de earth caved in; a terrible sound—as if de whole sky was rent wid thunder—immediately followed; an' den it was as light as day."

"A dream, Dinah. You soon was awake, I presume."

"Of course I was awake, mass'r, or I should not now be able to tell you what I seed."

"Undoubtedly you believe so; but then you was asleep."

"Shall I tell you more?"

"If you wish to do so. Tom, be not alarmed."

"Naw, mass'r; do n't be afeerd of dat."

"Proceed, Dinah."

"I rose up, an' my little Emma—in her white chemise—jist as we laid her in de coffin—"

"Oh! Emma! Emma!" exclaimed Uncle Tom, jumping up, unable to contain himself longer in the

chair; "had she on dat nice white cap, which these hands tied, an' kissed when de lid was closed ober her?"

"De identical cap, Tommy."

"Why did you not tell me dis afore?"

"She come running toward me; an' I held out my hand to her, and was 'bout to ax her a question; when lo! the brightness of de light dat encompassed her poor body so dazzled my eyes, that I staggered and fell upon my face!"

"And the fall, I suspect, brought you to your senses."

"Why, mass'r, I say dat I was awake, and know'd my situation as well as I now know dat you sit in de cheer."

"You think so; but how could you be buried up in the ground and remain alive? Foolish woman, you would smother to death."

"Mebbe it was my spirit."

"Pshaw! Who told you, Dinah, that the spirit left the body before death?"

"The preacher has told of spirits."

"Ah! but they are disembodied spirits—away from the earthly tenement, perhaps forever."

"So he said; but not certainly for forever. If they can come back after thousands of years, why not, mass'r, arter de lapse of an hour or a day?"

"Let us dismiss the subject, and think of freedom."

"I was guine to tell you, mass'r, how I did not lay but an instant, an' dat Emma beckoned to me."

"And did you come?"

"You had better believe I did; and dat, in a cloud of glory, we ascended high in de air. I looked in dis

direction, and here was de ole cabin; but I could not see Tommy. I thought perhaps he was off in de North, an' so I cast my eyes 'way dar, but could see noffin but white people. A person dat resembled one of de angels pictured in de Bible, inquired what I would find? I answered, my dear husband; and de angel remarked that the colored people dwelled in one country, an' de white in anoder. I instantly turned around; for I know'd, mass'r, whar' de color'd people dwell'd, and I beheld Tommy an' Caesar dancing to Jeff's ole fiddle as loosely as eber I seed um during my whole life."

"Did that content you?"

"I was so tickled at the antics which they cut up, dat I tried to burst out laughing; but, most miraculously, a veil, at that very moment, was drawn ober my countenance, and I found myself in de bed yonder!"

"Nothing but a dream, Dinah; and if, ten years hence, you should liappen to have a similar manifestation, I hope that you will behold your Tommy in the North—settled upon a farm, with a comfortable house, a large, thrifty orchard, and the pastures full of cattle, horses, and sheep. And instead of frolicking with a fiddler, I trust you will find him happy in the enjoyment of those sensible and substantial pleasures that belong to responsible manhood."

"He can not appear happier, mass'r, however he may feel."

"The brutes whisk and play, but would you change with them even your present low lot?"

"Of course not, mass'r; for when they die, that is de end of um. Animals will not rise, like us slaves, to de life immortal."

"Very well; let us stop moralizing. It is late, and if you expect to succeed, we must agree upon some plan of escape. What do you say, Tom?"

"We will be ready by Monday," he replied, with difficulty restraining himself from gaping.

"The time is easily named; but it will require concert of action to improve it."

"You can see Abe, an' git him to take us on from Winchester?"

"I can not do so, without exciting the suspicion of Mr. Erskine. You must send word to the hostler through some other channel."

"Den, trust dis nigger for dat. I 'm guine to bed," said the negro; and without more ado, began to undress.

"Dere 's no use of talkin' to Tommy now, mass'r Bates; he will be asleep in five minutes," said Dinah, who also began to show symptoms of drowsiness.

"So be it, then. Remember that Monday is only two days off, and you have but little time for preparation. Improve it, for this is my last proffer," replied the schoolmaster; and with evident reluctance, he raised the latch of the door, and returned as quietly as the stillness of midnight would admit of, to his chamber at the mansion.

CHAPTER XV

CASSY.

The sun had been looking into the cabin for at least an hour, in the morning, before Uncle Tom and Dinah were astir. Having broken the rule which they made, to go to bed punctually at nine o'clock, it is not surprising that they, in this instance, infringed upon their rule to get up precisely at five o'clock. The children, however, were not aware that it was midnight when the candle was blown out, and awaking at the usual time, wondered, as they rolled and tossed in the trundle bed, why mamma and papa slept soundly so long.

At last the eldest ventured to get up and dress himself. He went out at the door to stretch his limbs in the fresh air. As he was standing under the verandah, yawning, with his hands in the pockets of his trowsers, Hector came along, on his way to the corn-field.

"Sick in yer cabin, Joe?" he asked.

"I s'pose so."

"*S'pose!* Do n't you know?"

"The ole folks are not up yet."

"Dat 's queer; I reckon mass'r oberseer will look arter Uncle Tom."

Hector was not sure whether Joe was quizzing or not. He thought he would satisfy himself, and walked to the door and looked in. Uncle Tom was just getting up.

"Rather late. Goin' to your work without breakfast?"

"Why do you ax sich foolish question, Hector?"

"'Kase I hab not seen the smoke curl on the top of yer chimney dis mornin'."

"Pooh! jist be good enough to attend to your own business. I shall do my own hoeing afore dark," gruffly remarked Uncle Tom.

"Up late last night, I should n't wonder—eh?"

Our hero was nonplussed. Hector's visit was unexpected, and he felt ashamed that he overslept. He was afraid to answer, lest he might betray himself. Luckily, Dinah was awakened by the dialogue, and perceiving her husband's embarrassment, came to the rescue.

"Tell mass'r oberseer, Hector, that Tommy over-worked himself yesterday, and is ashamed to own it."

"Gib him rumatism, an' ole bones ach'd?"

"Yes, yes. He feels better 'though; do n't you, Tommy?"

"I'll show um when I git into the field," said he; and kindling some pine-kots in the fireplace, he asked his wife to make haste in cooking. She was spry in spreading the table, and preparing the breakfast. She

warmed some potatoes that were cooked the day before, and cut off a few slices of cold boiled bacon; and this, with corn cake baked in the griddle the evening previous, constituted the entertainment to which she invited her husband.

"There, Tommy, make your morning meal," said she, placing a chair by the table for him to sit in; "I will now dress de children, and eat presently."

"I wonder if dat jealous nigger didn't s'pose he coteh'd me? We know'd too much; was not dat so, Dinah?" said Uncle Tom, as he pounced upon the victuals, and pleased that Hector learned nothing to create suspicion.

"He left as empty as he come—the dunce! It is none of his business when you dress or undress. He has carried his head mighty high sin' he beat you plantin' corn. When he has seen ten years more, perhaps he can do as much as you. Let him wait till then, afore he brags too big."

"How I likes to hear you talk, Dinah. Go on; I'm in sich a hurry dat I hab no time now," he said; and swallowing the food as fast as possible, was soon ready to go to his work.

"Don't forget to git things togedder for Monday; an' let Joe spell you as much as he can, for we have a long jaunt ahead."

"Neber fear, Tommy."

"Dinah dressed the children; and after finishing her usual routine of morning duty, busied herself in making preparations to go North. She thought of many things she would like to take with her; but

how they were to be carried was a mystery. Then, what she would leave, puzzled her. The coverlets, which cost so many hours of hard labor to quilt, and which pleased her fancy so much, must be taken along. The feather bed was very near her heart; and it would be wicked to throw away that china tea-set, which Mrs. Erskine, on her deathbed, gave to her dutiful Dinah. And then, that charming young red heifer, so beautiful to the eye, which she had fed and caressed from a calf—to say nothing of the “six quart milking”—how could she leave the fine creature behind!

These thoughts occupied her mind, and troubled it. Her heart began to grow sad, and she moved with a slower step.

It was getting toward noon, and nothing was over the fire for dinner. Her husband would be prompt, for he ate a light breakfast. She hung the large iron pot upon the crane, and told Joe to go to the spring and get a pail of water. As he started upon this errand, a negress, not over twenty-five years of age—who went by the name of Cassy—came into the cabin. She was short and plump, with a roguish eye. Full of talk, and in a constant giggle, she rallied Dinah upon her laziness.

“Need n’t give no excuses, ole woman; I knows um all,” she said, as Dinah attempted to defend herself.

“What you mean, Cassy? I hab nothin secret.”

“O no!—noffin; jist as though I did n’t see mass’r Bates stroll under the verandah last night!—ah, ha! missus; you can’t fool me.”

"Is it strange, if he did? He is always takin' his walks."

"Mebbe not. But he stay'd late — long, long arter folks war abed. Some mischief afoot, I'll warrant ye."

"How you talk, Cassy. A whim you've got into your wool."

"Do n't you s'pose I know? Be honest now, an' own up."

"If you know, out with it."

"I seed a light through the latchstring hole! There, deny that, if you can."

"Pooh! did n't you eber witness that circumstance afore?"

"Well, I must own I neber did, in your cabin; it was this that surprised me. Come, Dinah, confess — ya! ya! ya! I know a thing or two 'bout mass'r Bates, myself."

"So Philisee remarked, de oder day."

"Philisee! what did that wench have the saucy impudence to say? I'll teach her to mind her own business, if she keeps up her scandal."

"No slur, Cassy."

"What was she bold enough to say?"

"A queer question. Why, you knows it is contrary to my principles to tell tales; you must excuse me."

"But I won't excuse you, Dinah. You shall expose that mischievous babbler. Come, explain; I shall not be jealous of mass'r Bates wid you!"

"Jealous of mass'r Bates wid me! Lor', Cassy! sich an idea neber entered my head."

"Out with it, then; do n't be afeerd of your shadow."

"I s'pose I must tell you, I hab gone so far. You must know that she said—but you will take it to heart, Cassy; it is wise, my ole man allows, to be silent."

"Pshaw! woman proceed."

"She said mass'r Bates was always *at your door*. There, you have it; now I hope you 're satisfied."

Cassy bowed her head upon her bosom, and sighed.

"I thought it would injure your feelings. I am so sorry I spoke; but you would make me, Cassy."

"Never mind—never mind. You are good woman, and I hope you will not think meanly of me. Mass'r Bates is winning in his manners, and an artful gemman. I found him out too late. I seed him go into your cabin last night. I watched until he come out; it was very late. I knew Uncle Tom was home, but I considered it my duty to caution you. Not that I am jealous—oh, no! You do not believe so, do you?"

"Bless you, I hope not; there is no cause, certainly."

"I must hurry back, for Jeff—my good, musical Jeff, will soon be in for his dinner. So keep mum, Dinah, will you?"

"Give yourself no uneasiness; I shall not peach."

Cassy's mind was in a flurry all the afternoon. She said more to Dinah than she intended. But the secret was out, and she must make the most of it. If Jeff could be kept in ignorance, she would be content, and the schoolmaster might enjoy his triumph in welcome. Thus she ruminated, and thought of a thousand ways to blind the eyes of her husband.

Dinah was astonished at the conduct of Mr. Bates, and did not know what to think of him. She expressed her doubts of his good intention, and suggested to Uncle Tom the propriety of delaying their departure beyond Monday ; but he insisted that they should not believe a word that Cassy uttered. “She ‘ was a slattern ’ to catch daws,” he said.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUNDAY.

The experiments of the chemist on an ounce of gold or mercury, when properly repeated and established, authorize general conclusions concerning the properties of all the gold or mercury in the world. So with the various sects and classes of mankind: the character and disposition of one, it is alleged, may justify a general conclusion as to the character of all. To a certain extent, this hypothesis is true. But locality, education,—even the blood itself, which, “more than all things else,” is the dividing line in human nature, like the seed in the vegetable kingdom—these properties, if we may be allowed the expression, create many exceptions, and so many to the general conclusion, that it is unsafe to form an opinion of the character and disposition of an entire sect or class, from what we may happen to learn concerning that of a particular member.

Dinah, however, thought otherwise. The information communicated by Cassy concerning Mr. Bates, had

a tendency to lessen her respect for the man, and to impair her confidence in his doctrine of freedom. She was afraid that she should add the guilt of disobedience to the misery she might be called upon to endure in a strange land, and, after sleeping upon her fear, so expressed herself to Uncle Tom. The suggestion did not change his views. He had as much faith as ever in the good intention and veracity of their friend.

It was Sunday. The morning sky was bright, with only a cloud or two floating in the high, blue ether. The weather was enervating, and bid fair to be hot during the day. Every thing—animate and inanimate—indicated rest. The flocks did not seem to bleat, nor the herds low, as on other days. The matured blades of grass did not sway to and fro, and the wheat, mellow for the sickle and cradle, was motionless. The waterfall was placid, and the heavens appeared to be breathless, and smiled in beauty.

There was quiet, too, at the quarters. Hector and Philisee, Jeff and Cassy, were in their respective cabins; there was no bustle. The morning meal seemed to prepare and clear itself away, so still did the negroes perform their domestic duties. All, both old and young, looked clean and comfortable. If a child strayed into the yard, it was to pluck a rose or cull a flower for mamma or papa inside the door.

Joe came to Philisee with a request from his mother to step into her cabin. The volatile slave sent back word that she was listening to the reading of the Bible, and must be excused. Dinah felt the rebuke keenly, but did not murmur. She was sewing together

the sleeve of a new calico dress. Conscience smote her, and she laid it aside in the work-basket. If she must work on that day in order to go North on the next, she told her husband he must postpone their departure. He reluctantly assented, but said he thought there would be an abundance of time on the morrow to get everything in readiness.

A minister of the Methodist persuasion, riding his circuit, preached every fortnight, during the summer season, about half a mile up the river. This was the regular day for public worship. Soon after nine o'clock, the slaves issued out from the quarters, taking with them all the children, and in an orderly manner proceeded up the road to attend the meeting. Arrived at the place, they seated themselves upon the benches that were conveniently arranged under the shade of two stately oaks, and silently and calmly awaited the coming of the preacher. There was an unusually large attendance from the plantations in that vicinity, the weather was so propitious. The assemblage was mostly composed of blacks, some of whom were known to have purchased their freedom. But the principal part were slaves. One class, however, could not have been separated from the other with any proximity to correctness, unless the task had been undertaken by a person accurately informed, so similar were the appearance and dress of both bond and free.

Ten o'clock was the hour designated for the exercises to commence. It was past the time, and the minister was not in his place; neither could he be seen coming in the distance. An accident of some kind,

certainly, must have befallen him, or he would not have failed to be there, was the current belief among all the congregation. He is sick, or been thrown from his horse—poor man! said one: he may be dead—bless his soul! whispered another: and whatever his condition, he had their devout and heartfelt prayers for a safe deliverance from earthly ills, or a happy repose in the courts of heaven.

The people remained quietly on the benches for an hour, and then, as the preacher was not present, they began to show symptoms of a disposition to leave. Mr. Bates ascended the pulpit, and proposed that the congregation should sing a hymn or psalm, before they separated. To this suggestion all readily assented, and immediately all, rising from their seats, joined in the following anthem:

“How long, eternal God! how long
Shall men of pride blaspheme?
Shall saints be made their endless song,
And bear immortal shame?

Canst thou forever sit and hear
Thine holy name profaned?
And still thy jealousy forbear,
And still withhold thine hand?

What strange deliv’rance hast thou shown
In ages long before?
And now no other God we own,
No other God adore.

Thou didst divide the raging sea,
By thy resistless might,
To make thy tribes a wondrous way,
And then secure their flight.”

Whoever of our readers may have attended a camp-meeting, will appreciate the scene which we attempt to describe. Oh! who has not, in his younger days, when the future, as he scanned its long vista with a puerile imagination, appeared to be an elysium strewed with the choicest flowers, and sweet with the rarest perfumes, stood in the bower that nature made, arched all over with the boughs of trees that reared their majestic tops to the skies in primeval magnificence, and heard, in rapt admiration, the melody of patriarchs and prophets, as it was chanted by some meek presiding elder or devout bishop, and echoed back with an increased volume from the vast amphitheater of christians and penitents that lay in sacred grandeur before him? and when the holy chant lost its last cadence upon the ear, and the pious song-book was closed by the priestly chorister, and his eyes gently, and as if by intuition, closed, and with suppliant look and uplifted arms he knelt upon his knees, who, we ask, has not then exclaimed in his heart, as did Uncle Tom now with his mouth, "Mass'r, let us pray?"

We need not add, that the whole assembly beneath the oaks, instantly knelt upon the ground, and the schoolmaster, with almost indecent haste, commenced, and, with an unfeeling voice, uttered the following prayer:

O! thou eternal God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being: enable us, we beseech thee, to pass the week to come in that manner which shall be most profitable to ourselves, and not dishonorable to thy gracious name.

We have no occasion to review the years which are passed, in order to find cause of humiliation in thy sight : every day and every week suggests abundant matter for painful reflection, and adds to our conviction that “ we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness as filthy rags.” O Lord ! if thou shouldst mark iniquity, who could stand ? Enable us, therefore, to confess our manifold sins with unreserved sorrow and shame ; to own that they are more in number than the hairs of our head, “ and a sore burden too heavy for us to bear ;” and to present ourselves, in deep contrition, at thy throne of grace, in humble faith, through our great and compassionate High Priest, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. With shame and regret, we confess that our souls are fallen under condemnation, and our bodies into *bondage*. We pray thee that we may not be confounded, when we would lift up our hearts unto thee. Give us true repentance and living faith ; discover to us every thing in our lives which displeases thee, or which may be useful to us to know, so that we may approach thee in genuine poverty of spirit, and with sincere and fervent longings after those blessings which we ask with our lips, and hope to enjoy hereafter on earth if we are true to ourselves. Enlighten our understandings : may thy holy word be treasured up in our memories, written in our hearts, and made legible in our tempers and conduct. May we be clothed with humility : enable us to “ do unto all men as we would they should do unto us :” to live on terms of amity and *equality* with, and to do good

unto all men, "but especially to them that are of the household of faith."

Finally, we beseech thee to be with us in all our employments, and may we act in them, as under thine eye, and as it becomes thy redeemed people. These are our prayers, through thy Son, Jesus, Emanuel, to whom, with Thee and the Spirit, we ascribe co-equal and eternal praise and adoration. Amen.

The believers,—and there were many—responded amen; and rising from their suppliant posture, were about to separate. The schoolmaster remarked that he fortunately had a book of sermons in his pocket, and, if agreeable, he would read one for their edification. Happy to prolong the meeting, the hearers universally assented to this proposition.

Mr. Bates at once opened his book and began to read from a discourse which, he announced, was composed by Mr. Wesley; but we have in vain ransacked the libraries of several divines for a copy to peruse at our leisure. Its theme was the escape of the chosen people of Israel from Egypt, and their pilgrimage to Canaan. It treated of adversity and prosperity. Servility and drudgery, penury and punishment, were the concomitants of the first; verdant vales and flowery fields, freedom of thought and independence of action, characterized the last. Egypt was a contracted and miserable hovel: Canaan an expansive and delightful palace. It dwelt upon this contrast, and pictured with much fullness of detail, the horrors of the former, and the glories of the latter. The zig-zag peregrination in the wilderness was described at length; and the

account of that wonderful and beneficent prodigy—the supply of manna to the starving tribes—was beautifully written, and emphatically enunciated by the reader.

The congregation listened attentively. Their interest increased in the subject as Mr. Bates proceeded from point to point; and when he approached the termination of the discourse, they rose up one after the other—especially the slaves—unable longer to contain themselves on the benches, so interested had they become in the extraordinary trials and protracted sufferings of the chosen people of God, now, for the first time, minutely and particularly narrated to them.

The sun had passed the meridian when Mr. Bates closed his book. Under the mask of disinterestedness, he excused his inability to entertain them further, and the multitude soon dispersed to their several homes.

The exercises at the oaks were unusual. The part which the schoolmaster had taken in them was unexpected; and this, with the sermon he read, was the subject of much remark among the blacks all the afternoon. The meeting, instead of being a “common-place affair,” produced a sensation. There were no indications, however, of humiliation, repentance, and prayer: nothing that looked like a “revival.” It was talked of in the same spirit as if the people had been celebrating some anniversary, or had attended a show. The expertness of the mountebank, or the drollery of the clown—the strength of the lion, or tameness of the elephant—the nimbleness of the pony, or the cunning of dandy jack,—would not have

been discussed with more freedom and particularity, than was the admirable performance of the schoolmaster on the present occasion. He had appeared in a new character, and sustained himself to his own satisfaction, and the delight of the audience.

Uncle Tom and Dinah were particularly pleased. They hailed the success of the men and women of Israel as the harbinger of their own. They had heard, generally, of the escape of their forefathers from the house of bondage; but now, for the first time, they had heard the story told in plain and simple language, in all the multiplicity and variety of detail, and it made a deep impression upon their minds. Joe, even, was not an unobservant spectator.

"Mother," he asked, "why can we not live in dat palace mass'r Bates read 'bout to-day?"

"Hush! child, you know not what you say," she quickly replied, lest he might be overheard.

"Mother, would *you* not like to go dar, if it was only for a little while?" said Joe, in a lower tone.

"We can not, my child, have our wish; so speak no more on de subject."

"Joe, how far do you s'pose you can walk in a day?" inquired his father.

"Dunno; but I should like to try."

"Could you stand it, an' lay out o' nights in the woods?"

"Jist as Moses an' —"

"Aaron, my child," interposed his mother.

"Yas, and Aaron, father?"

"Jist as Moses and Aaron."

“Why, I know’d I could. The Lor’ would keep off de wild animals and serpents.”

“And s’pose we had noffin to eat, an’ de Lor’ did not provide us ; you would cry and take on.”

“Not a bit. Try um, try um, father.”

“And then, s’pose I ax’d you to carry sis’y, to spell me ; an’ kase you did n’t, I struck you ; then you would hollow, and make de woods ring, an’ de ole bailiff would find us, and drag us back in irons to massa. I ’m afeerd to trust um, Dinah.”

“Pshaw ! Joe cry ? Not a bit. Too much like his daddy, to whimper. I ’d trust the one as quick as I would the other. You know how self-willed you are. You will find the boy the same. He would fight, if need be. Trust him.”

“Do you think of it, father ? ”

“Of what, child ? ”

“Of guine to dat place mass’r Bates spoke ’bout ? ”

“If I said yes, I ’m afraid you would mention um.”

“Not a bit. I believe it.”

“Pooh ! you hab no cause, my child.”

“I know’d it, or you would not ax me so many questions. I wish we could go to-morrow.”

“To-morrow ? ”

“Yas, to-morrow. I want to see the water sparkling from the fountains, an’ hear de music, and smell de spices.”

“I do n’t know how to think of what mass’r Bates said,” remarked Dinah ; “I ’m afeerd it is not true, Tommy.”

“I believe um all.”

“He speaks that he can not know.”

“K̄now? Of course he knows. He has been there, an’ now, like an angel, he condescends to come here to tell us.”

“What was dat he told Cassy, jist afore we got to the lawn of the house?”

“Jist afore he got to de lawn of de house?”

“Yes. Can’t you remember um? Somethin’ dat he was.”

“Oh! now I remembers. He said dat he was a missionary!”

“Well, I wish he would be a missionary every Sunday. The minister is a good man; but he can’t shine wid the missionary. Oh! how healing his words were to my soul.”

“Now, really, Dinah, did n’t he beat um all?”

“Oh! I could sit dar till now, and neber wink’d.”

“We will hear him agin — often — often — Dinah, in the land of freedom.”

“I have misgivings ’bout dat; I had rather stay here, and hear him under the oaks.”

“And neber enjoy happiness in dat great palace?”

Dinah just then saw Philisee pass by the window, and made no reply. Uncle Tom took the hint, and changed the conversation. He, nevertheless, continued to think of the missionary and the promised land.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE OVERSEER'S COMMUNICATION TO THE PLANTER.

Mr. Erskine and his daughter attended public worship that day, at Grace church, Millwood. It was near night before they returned to the mansion.

After the planter had partaken of a dish of coffee, he seated himself upon the piazza, and was soon surrounded by his family. Lucinda, during this short interval, told Mary all the particulars about the meeting. Mary thought it was lucky that Mr. Bates happened to have a sermon to read, and intended to rally him for turning minister, the first opportunity.

The overseer presently came up the lawn, and taking the liberty to ascend the steps, joined the family circle. It was not his habit to do so; and for this reason, Mr. Erskine gave him the more attention.

In answer to an inquiry how he had thus far passed the day, he remarked, that he went to the oaks; and informed the planter of the accidental absence of the preacher, and also who officiated as substitute. Mr.

Erskine expressed his regret, if any casualty had befallen the clergyman, but was pleased to learn that his tutor was present; and was gratified that he had the precaution to be prepared to supply the vacant desk.

The overseer was ignorant of the precise whereabouts of Mr. Bates; and as he did not wish then to make known to that gentleman any suspicion which he entertained of his good intention, and still desired to confer with the planter concerning what occurred at the meeting, he took occasion to ask him to go down toward the river and look at the crops. Mr. Erskine, thinking that the overseer might have some fresh ideas to communicate, had no hesitation to take the walk.

We believe that we have not yet mentioned the name of this overseer. Call him, reader, if you please, Mr. Gravity. The name certainly is appropriate; for he was very sedate; although, to his praise be it said, he had a kind heart, and a scrupulously honest disposition. If he ever plied the lash to the stubbornly disobedient slave, he used it, as nearly as we can recollect, precisely as a father does in the wholesome correction of his children. He did not punish with wantonness. And as to the management of the large tract of land entrusted to his care, he would have the measure even full—no more, and no less—notwithstanding a paltry trader once offered to share alike with him the profits, if he would “heap;” and the planter, on the other hand, years before the time we write—when he entertained ideas of accumulating wealth enough to be a *millionaire*—told him if he would “hollow” as he evened off, his annual salary

should be raised. He planned, managed, worked—just as if he owned, in his own right, the entire plantation. He knew what was wanted at the mansion, and he knew also what was needed at the quarters. In fact, he had been employed in his present capacity so long, that he would have felt himself an outcast, if he had been dismissed; and considered himself cashiered, if any part of his duties had been curtailed. He had grown to his situation. He was part and parcel, if the good-natured critic will permit us so to speak, of the estate, and it of him.

We said that the planter accepted the proposition of the overseer, and accompanied him toward the river. Mr. Gravity desired to talk to his employer about the exercises at the oaks—the prayer, and particularly the sermon. From modesty, if not goodness of feeling to the schoolmaster—and then from motives of prudence, lest the relations between Mr. Erskine and Mr. Bates had become so intimate, that the former's judgment might be so much warped in favor of the latter, as to be blind to foibles, however alarming—the overseer hesitated long before he opened his budget of fears, or even referred to the subject.

Finally, he alluded to the absence of the preacher—the number of hearers present—their apparent anxiety to hear the sound of the gospel, and the alacrity of the schoolmaster in lending his services for their gratification.

“Mr. Bates really read a sermon, did he?”

“Yes; and it was quite lengthy.”

“On the usual topic, I presume.”

"I think not."

"Ah! it was a discourse on doctrinal points."

"The doctrine was new to me."

"Pray, enlighten me."

"Slavery — freedom!"

"Slavery and freedom?"

"Aye, sir."

"What was the view taken by the author?"

"Why, sir, the discourse opened with a description of Egypt, and the hardships of bondage."

"Doubtless the same as recorded in the sacred writings."

"If so, I have never been so fortunate as to set my eyes on it. What he read was new to me."

"I take it, there was no design. It so happened; perhaps Mr. Bates thought that subject would be the most interesting to such an assembly."

"Of that I have no doubt, or he would not have taken the trouble to have prepared it in advance."

"Prepared it in advance! Oh! that could not have been so. The sermon, probably, was compiled many years ago, and he chanced to have it. Fortunate—for I have noticed that the slaves are better to work during the week, if they hear the preacher on Sunday."

"It was not printed, sir."

"Written on vellum? A venerable document, then. I must ask to see it."

"I was near enough to have a good view; it was written on ordinary paper, and looked fresh. I believe the composition was his own, and prepared for the occasion."

"That can not be possible. You wrong him; how could he know that an opportunity would be offered to-day to deliver it? The preacher was accidentally absent."

"There is a mystery about this matter; a private understanding, I suspect, to create disaffection among our people," said the overseer, with more self-possession.

"Why, sir, how you astonish me! I repeat, it can not be possible."

"Very well. I considered it my duty to call your attention to what occurred. I hope your construction is right."

"I shall talk with Mr. Bates."

"And, if you do, I predict he will satisfy you that he entertained the audience from the best of motives."

"Prejudice! that is prejudice—downright prejudice."

"So let it be considered. I hope such is the fact."

"Have you any suggestion to make?"

"None."

"Upon what terms are you?"

"Friendship, sir."

"Do you often talk with each other?"

"Frequently—very frequently, sir."

"Perhaps, then, you may sift this matter better than myself. Seek his company, and learn what you can."

"I will do so at the earliest opportunity."

"But take good care to cloak all suspicion of evil design on his part; for I would not needlessly injure

his feelings. I have enjoyed his acquaintance long enough to know that he is extremely sensitive."

The overseer again signified his willingness to catechise the schoolmaster; and parting company with the planter, took the path that lead toward the lane.

Mr. Erskine made his way back to the piazza. The overseer's communication annoyed his mind, and he was not as talkative as usual. Mary noticed her father's taciturnity, but attributed it to fatigue; or perhaps, thought she, he may be contemplating, in the quiet twilight of eve, those beautiful thoughts of future bliss that we heard to-day at Millwood. She would not interrupt him, and locking her arm with Frederick's, they tripped around the house, went into the garden, and plucked some flowers.

"How pleased father is with our clergyman—he read service and preached so sweetly," said Mary.

"I do n't know," answered her brother, shaking his head. "Pompey gibbers queerly about the sermon at the oaks."

"Oh, fie! that does not disturb father's serenity. He does not fear the enlightenment of our slaves."

"There goes Mr. Bates. Let us sit in the arbor, and see if he is not going over to the quarters."

Mary complied with her brother's request, but it was already too dusky to discern objects distinctly at a distance.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SUSPICION.

The next day was cloudy and unpleasant. A rain set in during the forenoon, and the slaves did not work in the field. The overseer availed himself of this interruption to inform the planter of the interview with Mr. Bates.

He was fortunate enough to fall in company with the latter gentleman the evening before, without waking him suspect that it was intentional. They were in the pasture that lay between the flower-garden and the quarters. They met each other, going in an opposite direction. The schoolmaster was in a hurry, but the overseer continued to detain him in conversation, until he had asked all the questions that his mind suggested.

Mr. Erskine was in the library when the overseer came into the house. Without hesitation, Mr. Gravity walked in, not forgetting to leave the door ajar, so that Lucinda, who was near by in the kitchen, might hear the conversation, if she was disposed to listen. The planter had been busily engaged all the morning in writing, and did not appear to be aware of the state of

the weather outside. The appearance of the overseer was, therefore, unexpected, and with a countenance indicating much surprise, he inquired if there was trouble "at the work."

Mr. Gravity remarked that it was too wet to continue it that day with profit, and he had come to tell him what the schoolmaster said.

"Very good," replied the planter, removing the spectacles from his eyes, and laying them upon the desk. "How did you find him?"

"Shy, sir, very shy."

"The deuce you did! hey?"

"Very loth to talk, sir, very."

"Well, did you learn anything worth mentioning?"

"Enough, sir, to satisfy me that he did not preach by chance."

"Now, Mr. Gravity, do not alarm me unnecessarily. Come to the point, and mention what actually transpired. Give me his words, if you please."

"You must know, Mr. Erskine, then, that I treated him civilly; I did not take off my hat, but talked on equal footing. After complimenting him for his kindness —"

"Pshaw! my good man; give me the precise language. It is important, so that I may know exactly what to do."

"Will you do me the favor to loan the book? I was so much interested in your discourse that I would like to read it," I asked.

"With great pleasure; but Mr. Rawls is before you, and he has it," replied Mr. Bates.

"It was interesting and instructive. It must have cost you some pains to write." I added, to tickle his vanity.

"Easy, Mr. Gravity. Did you not know it was always easy to tell the truth?"

Uncertain whether he was not fooling me, I answered: "It was a little too smart writing, Mr. Bates, for you!" and he flew at once into a passion.

"Oh! I do not wish to offend you, Mr. Bates. I was only taking the liberty of expressing my opinion," I immediately added.

"I do n't dress myself, sir, in borrowed plumage. I wrote it myself, in yonder chamber. If you was pleased with the ideas, I am happy so to be informed. I put them together as well as I knew how," he replied, with considerable pertness in his manner.

"To be frank, I liked the style better than the matter; too much about slavery to suit this climate."

"Truth is truth, and I maintain it should always be spoken."

"Did you know that the preacher would be absent to-day?" I then inquired, for I felt sure the answer would give me the key I was trying to find. I did so reluctantly, though, for I could n't but think he would mistrust my object.

"His reply, Mr. Gravity?" interrupted the planter, becoming excited, and impatient to be apprised of the worst, if the schoolmaster intended to create a rebellion.

"I did. He so informed me at the previous meeting. Conference is in session."

"Did he ask you to supply his place?"

"Yes; and as I had leisure, I wrote the sermon you listened to."

"When Mr. Rawls is tired of it, I suppose I may expect the pleasure of reading it?"

"Certainly," he assured me, and we parted. There, sir, you have the interview, word for word, as nearly as my recollection will enable me to give it.

"Very well. Now, what conclusion did you come to?" asked the planter."

"That Mr. Bates means no good. He is what I call a rogue, in common parlance."

"Does he mean rebellion, d'ye think?"

"He means to excite insurrection among our people."

"If so, the bottomless pit is too good for him!" replied the planter, swelling with rage.

"Have you any commands?"

"Not at present; I will inquire further. It is a boyish trick; I can not believe that it is serious."

The overseer left the library, and Mr. Erskine resumed his writing. It was with difficulty, however, that he could content himself long enough to finish the letter, which he was anxious should go by the next post to his factor at Richmond. He determined to be plain with Mr. Bates, as soon as school was over, and let him know that he could not violate law with impunity. He believed this to be his duty. And yet, he did not wish to injure the schoolmaster's feelings with false imputation or idle clamor. He could not perceive the motive to do so great an injury, and perhaps the foolish man did not reflect upon the effect which a

promulgation of such sentiments might have upon the blacks.

He finished the letter—folded and superscribed it—and stepped to the door to call Pompey to carry it to the postmaster. As he opened the door, whom should he meet, but Cassy, in tears, and begging the privilege to tell massa her secret. He directed the wretched negress to go into the library, and remain there until he returned. Although the master was in bad humor, and answered petulantly, his order sounded pleasantly upon Cassy's ears, for her heart was almost ready to burst with grief.

"Now, Cassy, be quick, and tell me what brings you here. I can not wait for a long story," said Mr. Erskine, as he returned to his chair by the desk.

"Mass'r Bates, he —"

"Mr. Bates! what do *you* know of that gentleman?"

"Why, massa, he has been gallant wid me, an —"

"Well, out with it. I am prepared to hear that he is a perfect devil!" said the planter, the real character of the schoolmaster now flashing upon his mind, and satisfied that he had not done him injustice in attributing bad motives to his efforts in the pulpit. "Out with it."

"Why, massa, he threatened me with eternal torment, if I did not pack up my duds, and go North wid him!"

"And leave Jeff forever?"

"Da 's it."

"When did he make this hellish threat, Cassy?"

"Last night, arter all war abed. He coaxed me to go ober de hill!"

"Vile creature! I will call him to account. No, that will not do: such a being has not the manly courage to face death; he would resort to some subterfuge to gain time, and, meanwhile, sneak off! Besides, he is no gentleman! I will treat him accordingly," soliloquized Mr. Erskine, as he rapidly paced the room. Suddenly recollecting himself, he turned to Cassy, and mildly said, "Go, my honest woman, to your quarters, and keep your own counsel. I have always been a father to you; I will protect you now. So, hush! dry up your tears; and if the scamp again approaches you, slap him in the face—he is too white-livered to resent the insult."

"Yas, massa, I thank 'e," said the slave, and made a handsome curtsy. She left the library, relieved of much of her sorrow and anxiety. If her heart could have spoken, it would have uttered thanks upon thanks. The soothing words of the planter poured the balm of consolation upon its many bleeding wounds; and the honest-minded woman, as she tripped over the pasture, carried her head higher, walked more erect, and could look whoever she might meet more fully in the face than at any time during the past four months. She felt as if she had shaken off something which was withering to the touch, and nefarious to the soul! She felt regenerated—she was disenthralled! She was herself again—pardoned by her master—at peace with her husband—and there we leave her, forever.

Mr. Erskine's torment of mind, on the contrary, had just commenced. For thirty years he had worked his plantation in quiet—that *otium cum dignitate*, pleasing

to the recipient, and wholesome, in its moral influence, to the community. He never had borrowed trouble from intestine broils, until a short time back; and his agreeable journey to the federal capital relieved him of all apprehension. And now, to think that he had voluntarily taken the viper into his own bosom, and warmed it into life, and nourished it into manhood, for the express purpose, as it would seem, of stinging its benefactor! he could scarcely contain himself even to think of it. The idea was horrible—the purpose most unnatural—the being that could, under those circumstances, harbor such a disposition, must be a monster! He bolted the door, shut himself up in his library—resolved to review in his mind, undisturbed, what the tutor may have said and done. He collected together the entire conduct of Mr. Bates, and viewed it as a whole. He pondered upon it—thought it over and over, again and again; but there it was—foul and black! He called in charity—that angelic virtue, which covereth a multitude of sins—and it remained unchanged. There was but one alternative, if he would avert the consequences. The hydra must be strangled! This conclusion reached, and he felt and knew he had no time to lose. He at once sent for the faithful overseer, and communicated his suspicion. The time had arrived for promptitude and decision. He directed the overseer to watch every action of the schoolmaster, and note every word he uttered, and to report, from time to time, at the library. This order was gladly received, and obedience promised.

CHAPTER XIX.

SCHOOLMASTER'S UNEASINESS AND DEPARTURE.

Mr. Bates was not at the dinner-table. He met Jeff, as he was returning from the lane, who informed him there was trouble. Instead of going directly to the mansion, he turned his course toward the river, ostensibly for the purpose of playing the angler, but in fact to avoid Mr. Erskine. When near the middle of the meadow, he observed the overseer behind, and coming in the same direction. He had no reason to suppose the latter on his track, and probably would not have entertained the thought, if he was not conscious that he had done wrong. He hurried his step. It made no difference, however; the overseer maintained his distance. This increased the uneasiness.

What was to be done, but to bait the hook and angle for fish, and then go to his study, as if he had nothing in particular to think of. By so doing, he would gain time for reflection, and the better determine subsequent conduct. He adopted this suggestion, and treating Mr.

Gravity cavalierly, when he came up, loitered awhile on the bank of the stream, and then leisurely retraced his steps to the road, and went up to the house.

It was now near the middle of the afternoon. The rain stopped sometime before, and the sun shone in unclouded splendor. He looked out of the chamber window, and gazed upon the sparkling waters of the Shenandoah, as they meandered through the fields and meadows. There was the same fertile and lovely valley; and high above all these towered the same high hills and lofty mountain ranges, covered with the same thick woods and extensive forests; and they looked as inviting and magnificent as when his eyes first fell upon them. He could not bear to think that he must so quickly abandon the enjoyment of such scenery, and leave the country. He would rather remain in this little paradise, and continue to partake of the hospitality of the planter. But, to gratify the wish was out of the question; there was a mighty moral principle at stake; and acting in obedience to the impulses of an enlarged philanthropy, he must perform his duty. If he had sown the whirlwind, he was content to reap the storm. His zeal in the cause was not ephemeral, and he should "stand the hazard of the die." He was not quite sure, however, that Mr. Erskine penetrated his design. He would act prudently, and "bide his time."

Several days elapsed, and the interval employed by the respective parties in reconnoitering. The one endeavoring to ascertain what might be afoot, and the other to escape detection. The schoolmaster was

irregular in his attendance at the dining-room, and anything but communicative when present. If any of the family mentioned his loss of appetite, the disinclination to eat was attributed to heat and lassitude. If absence from the mansion, more than usual, was referred to, a desire to wander alone, and contemplate in solitude, furnished the reply.

Meanwhile, the overseer did not remain idle. He "laid in" with Jeff to watch Uncle Tom's motions; and the dutiful negro was an almost constant visitor at the cabin. Mr. Gravity had suddenly become enamored of solitude, also, and gratified this desire as liberally as the schoolmaster. If the one roamed over to the quarters, or into the lane, or across the river, or among the hills, or up and down the highway, the other invariably did the same. Nature, all at once, had become wonderfully entertaining to Mr. Gravity, and on no account could he persuade himself to relinquish the pleasure. Neither could he sleep as long, or consent to be shut up the whole night in a narrow, contracted bedroom. He preferred a broader canopy, and hence was out, frequently, long after dusk; especially, if Mr. Bates was not in the house. This coincidence of thought, inclination, and action, might seem queer to a stranger on the plantation; but to those who were conversant with "the state of affairs," such conduct, probably, would be deemed in admirable keeping with the duty which Mr. Gravity was attempting to perform. Be this as it may, he meant that the schoolmaster should not be out of his sight, when away from the chamber.

Mr. Bates was exceedingly annoyed by the constant presence of the overseer. He finally became satisfied it was useless to attempt an insurrection among the slaves. The urbanity of the planter had changed into coldness; his intercourse with the family was fast becoming disagreeable; and guilty in thought, if not in deed, and fearful of condign punishment, he wished himself safely in some other climate. The agreement to teach run for a year, and more than a moiety of the time was yet to elapse. Besides, he foolishly intimated, at the outset, that he should not wish to receive his salary piecemeal. If he now asked for the money, it would create distrust, and his motive would be suspected. He must embrace some scheme to extricate himself from this unpleasant dilemma.

Mr. Erskine now passed the greater portion of the time in his library. One morning, Mr. Gravity came running in, and handed him a letter.

"There, sir, have the goodness to look at that document," said he, almost out of breath.

"What have you here?" asked the planter, unfolding it.

"Please open, and see for yourself."

It read as follows:

"DEAR SON,—It is my painful duty to inform you, that death has entered our house. After a short but distressing illness, your father departed this life, on Sunday night. He died in peace with man, and with perfect confidence in God, and an unclouded hope of eternal salvation. His last request was, that you

should immediately return home. Although he left only small worldly possessions, the greater care is needed. You know I am too old to do much, and your sisters rely upon their only brother to look after their rights. Do not fail, then, to come forward immediately.

"I have no time to write more; and I hope that it is not necessary. Be sure and come, for we all mourn deeply our loss, and feel very lonely and sad.

"We should have written you before; but we had hopes of your father until it was too late. Bless his good soul! I hope it is in heaven, where we all pray finally to go. Write me by return mail when we may expect to see you. Sisters send their warmest love. Written in haste. Yours affectionately,

POLLY BATES."

"There is no date—ah! postmarked Benson. The abbreviation for state is too obscure to make out—August 8, and addressed to Henry Bates. Good! I suspect it belongs to the schoolmaster; dropped it accidentally, I presume. We shall now get rid of him, I do believe. Well, take it to him, and see what he says."

Mr. Gravity was equally pleased with Mr. Erskine, to think that the plantation would soon be rid of its worst enemy, and he hurried to find the owner of the letter. Luckily, the schoolmaster happened then to be in his study, and the overseer soon found him.

"Pompey picked up this in the fruit orchard: perhaps you are the owner?" he said, holding up the letter.

"Why, how came you by that, sir? The post brought it yesterday, and I must have mislaid it in the arbor, where I was crying over its contents."

"Very likely, sir. Melancholy news!"

"Oh! yes, Mr. Gravity, very painful. I scarcely slept last night, it troubled me so."

"That's a whopper of a lie! for you was at the cabin, to my certain knowledge," said the overseer to himself.

"I hardly know what course to pursue. Perhaps you will be so kind as to advise me, Mr. Gravity?"

"With all my heart. Follow me."

The schoolmaster could do no less than obey the command. He did it, reluctantly, though, for the overseer was so abrupt, that he could not conjecture whither he was to be conducted, nor what might be the motive. In a moment, however, he discovered that he must face the planter. This was decidedly more painful than the intelligence contained in the letter.

"Mr. Bates desires to advise about going North," remarked the overseer to the planter, as he showed the schoolmaster into the library.

"Ah! I am at your service, sir," immediately said Mr. Erskine.

"I do not know whether you are aware that I have received a letter, informing me of the death of my father?"

"I read it, sir, through inadvertence. You will excuse the impudence. What can I do for you?"

"I should be happy to comply with my mother's earnest request, if you would let me off, sir, from my agreement."

"By all means, sir; I should be a monster to decline. When do you propose to start?"

"I would like to go to-morrow—or the day after, at furthest,—if convenient to you, I prefer to-morrow."

"You shall go to-morrow, sir," said the planter. "If you don't, blast me!" he muttered to himself.

"I will be obliged to trouble you to send Pompey with me to Millwood."

"Oh! with pleasure, sir. You can get yourself ready, and we will give you an early start. There is your salary," replied Mr. Erskine, at the same time giving the schoolmaster his money.

Mr. Bates retired to his chamber to pack up. His scheme to get away worked admirably. The letter was an excellent hoax, and accomplished precisely what he desired. He was in high glee with himself throughout the day.

"Mr. Gravity," said the planter, after the schoolmaster had gone out of the library, "have an eye on the scamp to-night. You will go yourself in the morning. Be off early: and mark you, don't leave him until you get to Winchester; Millwood is too near."

"Yes, sir; trust me for that."

"And d'ye hear? See that he is booked for Philadelphia, and fare paid."

"Yes, sir."

"And, Mr. Gravity, see him driven off in the stage, bag and baggage."

"Rely on that, sir."

"A good riddance, and cheap at that!" exclaimed the planter, who was also in high glee throughout the day.

CHAPTER XX.

UNCLE TOM'S NOTIONS OF FREEDOM.

“Unchanged within to see all changed without,
Is a blank lot, and hard to bear, no doubt.”

Nearly a month after the occurrences mentioned in the preceding chapter, Uncle Tom was strolling one evening in the lane. It was the season of full moon, in the latter part of September. Darkness did not seem to follow the day, it was so light. The enervating, sultry, scorching heat of the summer months had passed away. A soft, mild, gentle breeze, fanned the valley; and after the hours of labor, it was more invigorating to sit upon the fence, or loiter upon the field, and inhale the fresh and bracing air, than to seek rest in bed, and breathe the close, warm, and fetid atmosphere of the house or cabin. He sat down upon a large stone by the margin of the brook opposite the hovel.

In this humble tenement, the slave was imprisoned: here the schoolmaster taught the children how to read

and spell ; and here he met his brother slaves, to counsel together, and plan rebellion ! Their great adviser and good friend was gone. No more did they see his pleasant smile, or listen to his kind and cheering words. No longer did the little boys and girls hie to school in the morning, and at night prattle about the incidents of the school-room. The door of the hovel was wide open ; the benches were turned upside down, the table had lost one of its legs and tumbled upon the floor,—even the master's chair did not maintain an upright position ; the weeds were fast acquiring possession of the step below the sill ; thistles were striving to blockade the entrance, and the cricket was chaunting its lonesome requiem !

The view was too much for Uncle Tom—it looked too desolate and lonely—and he rose up to go away.

“Da’s it!” shouted Cæsar, near by, on his return from the river. Uncle Tom felt ashamed that he was observed, and would fain get out of sight and hearing : he paid no attention to the salutation. “Lor’! wha’ you ’bout? afeerd of dis nigger in de night, am you? Oh, ho! hold your feet till I cotch you,” again shouted Cæsar, and ran to overtake him.

“It’s no use; I will stand and endure um,” said Uncle Tom to himself, and again sat down upon the stone.

“Musing, Tom?” asked Cæsar as he came up.

“I s’pose you would call um dat,” gruffly uttered, was the reply.

“Dat disease will be the death of you, I s’pects.”

“Pooh! dunno, nigger what yer talking’ bout.”

“Den enlighten me. Da’s de reason, kase I ax’d you, Tom.”

“Do you really wish me to speak to you, Cæsar?”

“Yas, spoke um, ole man.”

“Shall I be respected?”

“Dunno de meanin’; talk nat’ral; gib um in plain language,” said Cæsar, knitting his eyebrows and rubbing his forehead.

“Know, den, nigger, dat I was thinking of Kanon. Now do n’t ax me agin. It does no good to preach to you: you are hard-hearted—berry hard-hearted.”

“Did you speak of dat Kanon mass’r Bates was talkin’ of in meetin’?”

“De same.”

“Lubly place, d’ye reckon, Tom?”

“Noffin like um under de sun.”

“I do n’t know bout dat: smart place to beat our ole valley, I can tell ye.”

“Pshaw! you do not appreciate. I know’d so afore I spoke. I waste my breath.”

“Prehaps, now, you think I can be fooled; don’t flatter yourself with sich nonsense, Tom.”

“Now, stop right dar, nigger! Too familiar; you us’d to speak more respectibly. Why don’t you address me by my title?”

“Title! You hab dis critter now; I gib um up.”

“Why don’t you call me Uncle Tom—*Uncle* Tom?”

“O ho! dat’s de question, hey?”

“Yas.”

“You lost it in that ole cabin, dar; d’ye seed um?”

The punished slave bit his nether lip so hard that it bled, and stood up. He drew up his arms as if he was upon the point of dealing a blow upon Cæsar's head. He doubled his fists, and shook them at his comrade.

"Repeat that agin, an' I will be the death o' ye!" he exclaimed, in a voice so loud that it echoed back, in the stillness of the evening, from the distant "elms."

"How awful that sounds!" said Cæsar, as the echo died upon the ear.

"You should not insult me, then. I will not be trifled with by color'd people: bad enough to be treated contemptuously by the white."

"You put on too big airs for ole Virginny. When you git to dat palace mass'r Bates preached 'bout, I 'spose you can be king yourself?"

"Oh! if I only had some guide to lead me through de wilderness!" exclaimed the slave—his bosom heaving with a sigh.

"Wha'! wha' d'ye say? Run off—run away?"

Uncle Tom was hardly conscious of what he was saying, but too proud to recall the remark, he replied, with more fierceness in his looks than when he doubled his fists,

"Mention—lisp to a mortal ear what I uttered, an' I'll stop the breath as it comes up in your throat!"

"If you go, you would never come back agin; do you understand dat?"

"Pooh! I never should wish so."

"It would be of no use, if you did."

"I should know de way, an' could travel it at my will."

"De law will neber allow runaway slaves to return; so if you leave Dinah, it is forever!"

"Nonsense, nigger; who fool'd you dis time?"

"Nobody you'll find. De oberseer mentioned dis fact."

"He spoke um to scare you; mind you, now, if I am not right, Cæsar."

"O, de Judge neber lies. Massa would attend to him, if he did not tell his people the truth."

"Well, I never should want to come back."

"Not eben to see Dinah an' children? What a hard heart you hab come to!"

"Now cry! do act foolish jist for once in your life. I ask you, in all soberness, if I can not, upon a pinch, take my children an' my own dear wife along wid me?"

Cæsar made no answer, and seemed to gaze intently upon the heavens. Uncle Tom perceived it, and marveled what attracted his attention.

"Do you s'pose de same star shines upon Kanon?"

"Mass'r Bates did not say, Cæsar."

"Is dat your answer?"

"Yas, nigger, no oder. What do you see?"

"Den I advise you to git sensible agin, afore you talk of Kanon; dat's all I hab to mention."

"Why, man, what do you mean?"

"Dat you should hear Joe read de Bible—God's book—afore you trust to the sayings of man."

"I's ignorant of de point, Cæsar; explain um."

"Why, you ignorant ole nigger! does not dat big book say there is but one moon, an' dar she am? Oh, how bright! jist like de shiny silver dollar I seed massa put into Dinah's hand dis morning?"

"Dinah, d'ye mention!" quickly ejaculated Uncle Tom, and throwing his body into a most startling attitude.

"Why not Dinah? you know dat am not de first time sich circumstance occurred," replied Cæsar, almost equally surprised that his simple words should so affect Uncle Tom. The latter thought for a moment, and in a mild tone, smilingly said:

"Proceed, Cæsar. I was waitin' to hear you preach!"

"I do n't take my text from man's lips, if I do preach," remarked Cæsar, inclined to be angry at Uncle Tom's pleasantry.

"Now you are angry! Pshaw! keep your temper," said he, in a sarcastic tone of voice.

"Cut deep, cut deep! draw no white man's razor ober my throat," said Cæsar, the remark having a different effect from what was intended.

"I neber shall hear your sermon—neber—if you hobble in dis manner."

"Perhaps, now, you ole sinner, you spose dat you ar' to hear talkin' from dis nigger. Mistakin', mistakin', Tom; but if you will hear me in de right spirit, I will proceed."

"You know'd, Cæsar, dat I was alwars glad to hear you talk. My ears flop in your favor," replied Uncle Tom, beginning to be anxious to know what Cæsar would say.

"When I left off I was talkin' of de silvery moon."

"Yas."

"Well, den ; dat high moon, so many millions an' *millions* of miles 'bove our heads, that encompasses the big throne of de Lor' wid its immense radiance — dat same high moon shines on Kanon an' dis lubly of all de valleys in heaven an' earth — de valley for me."

"'Zactly so, Cæsar. But de argument — de argument ; dat 's what dis ole nigger would like ; gib um."

"Do you s'pose you would see um in dat palace in Kanon, where de mighty tall candlesticks gib so resplendently their light, wid de gold an' de silver upon door panels, an' on brazen images of all de saints, reflecting light so dazzling that your berry eyes would shut? Pooh! you might as well as hab no moon."

"Berry good. Dat don't argue against freedom!"

"But whar would be Dinah?"

"Dunno."

"Lookin' at de moon. An', if you was out of de palace, on de plantation, or any whar else in a land proper for you, living jist as you do now, or as Abe, de hostler, at Winchester — you would meet Dinah's eyes, an' Joe's eyes, an' your children's eyes, 'way up in de moon dar, jist as you do now. Don't you seed um?"

"No, you fool!"

"You do n't, hey?"

"Do you?"

"Out of your right mind, jist as I s'posed. Of course I do not. Dis nigger am no gallant. Don't you seed somethin' dat looks like a human face?"

“Yas.”

“Dat ’s Dinah, wonderin’ why you make so big fool of yourself as to think of Kanon.”

Uncle Tom was not pleased with Cæsar’s disquisition upon astronomy. It was too personal. He despaired of converting the stubborn skeptic, and his notions of freedom were so little appreciated by his fellow slaves, that he began to doubt himself. Not desirous of prolonging the present conversation, he moved up the lane, and soon entered the cabin.

Since the departure of the schoolmaster, Dinah had lost all desire to go to the free states. They could not go without a guide, and there was no one to perform that office. Besides, Mr. Bates left so suddenly—without even bidding them “good-bye”—her confidence in his integrity was impaired, and she believed the land of happiness he pictured in such fascinating colors, to be a humbug. Contented as she was, she did not wish to change her quarters. All the trouble of leaving, and the incidental preparations, had once been encountered, and without success. She experienced the mortification of returning from Winchester, and abandoning the journey to the North; and all on account of the faithlessness of the schoolmaster, as she believed. They managed to avoid being seen by Mr. Erskine, or the overseer, and their intended flight remained a secret on the plantation. She vowed in her heart not to be caught in that plight again.

Not so with her husband. Two failures in succession, to carry out his plan of escape, neither discouraged or intimidated the disposition to change his

residence. He was full of expedients, and had a , unchangeable will. His aversion to labor increased ; his love for the master was daily growing less. Later at work in the morning, he was earlier at the cabin in the evening. Destitute of ambition to see the crops well garnered, and losing all interest in the prosperity of his owner, he was lazy during the day, and would slight his duty, if possible. He watched the eyes of the overseer with great assiduity, appearing to be more interested in their movements than in executing the task imposed upon him, however light or inconsiderable it might be. He availed himself of the slightest jar, to stir up ill feelings, and engender discontent. If the overseer spoke harshly, or looked cross, the circumstance was magnified, until such efforts became so abundant, and frequently so inopportune, that the effect was contrary to what was intended, and Uncle Tom's companions were disposed to jeer and ridicule his sayings—so wisely uttered, in his own judgment—and to treat him with indifference and contempt.

These efforts to distract, and create mischief and discontent, were noticed by the overseer, and brought to the attention of the master. The slave was put under a stricter regimen, and his movements more closely observed. Dinah was aware of all this, and oftentimes, in the absence of her husband, was sorely grieved in spirit at his waywardness. But what could she do? If an abundance of victuals, and cooked with a good relish—a cleanly floor and soft bed—a wholesome cabin, and a pleasant smile—with no drudgery at home, and an undeviating obedience to

the smallest request—if these could not induce contentment, her wit was exhausted, and “things must take their course.” After Hector, and Cæsar, and Jeff would no longer listen to his complaints, he would bottle up his wrath, and pour it out unrelentingly when partaking of his meals, or lingering about the door. The master was unkind, the overseer was severe, the work was hard, his clothes were too ragged, his back ached with rheumatism, he was sick—in short, the world went wrong with him. Dinah would meekly listen, but make no answer. If the menaces and ill-natured vociferations of the father aroused the compassion of the children for their mother, she would instantly check it, and excuse his conduct, however great the moroseness or severe the provocation to retaliate. She loved her husband, and cast all the blame upon the schoolmaster. If he had never visited the plantation, she believed Uncle Tom would have been a better and a happier man.

In this wise days, weeks, and even months, passed away. Once or twice he was prevailed upon to go to “meeting” at the oaks; but he had lost even his taste for that; and as for religious service in his closet at home, it had been entirely neglected. The voice of prayer, there, was no longer heard; he crawled into his bed at night, thankless for his existence, and hopeless for the future. We said hopeless; not quite so. He had yet a hope that he should some day exchange his present lot for the state of freedom.

One Saturday afternoon, toward the close of corn

harvest, Dinah pressed him hard to go and hear Jeff fiddle, and dance off "the blues."

"Dat am unpossible! Yer music will do no good. I am too big to play like children," he said, without a care for any enjoyment which Dinah might receive from the pastime.

"You increase your misery by your obstinacy."

"Dar am whar' you deceive yourself. You think, 'kase I am fretful, I would not dance; dat 's a mistake."

"I is sure — sure, Tommy."

"S'pose I told you, you would not believe."

"O, yes I would! I is alwars sure to hear an' think right," she said, patting him under the chin.

"I would like to listen to de fiddle; but dat instrument now disconcerts my thoughts."

"*You* am deceived dar, Tommy. You hab no thoughts now, except to throw blame on Dinah's shoulders."

"My mind is constantly on de wrong we both suffer."

"Do n't include me."

"Yas, yas; I know'd you ar' not conscions. 'Tis not like rheumatism. Bigger pain, we both suffer."

"Name it, Tommy."

"We suffer an evil. We ar' subjects of de curs'd institution of slavery. We hab de power of shakin' um off; but we ar' too cowardly — too cowardly; dat 's de trouble."

"Oh! I hab heard you say dis so many times that I am sick of de sound. Why do n't oder niggers know, an' feel, an' speak so?"

"'Kase they hab no brains like Uncle Tom; dat 's the reason."

"I s'pects de oder people hab not as much dislike to massa as yourself, Tommy."

'Neber you mind dat; I am instructin' them, day by day. You 'll see em hobble; hold your breath awhile, an' you will not find me alone in my feelins'."

Dinah was upon the point of asking for an explanation of this enigma, but she thought it was one of her husband's idle sayings, and he might be displeased if she appeared to be incredulous.

"I am guine to hear Jeff," she said.

"Dat 's right, Dinah. I am guine to hear better music; shall I tell you?"

"Yes, Tommy; I always like to hear you talk."

"I am guine to hear mass'r Gravity preach to de niggers; an' Jeff will be dar, too," he replied, and bursting into a loud laugh, hopped over the fence.

This was a greater enigma than the other. Dinah, however, did not permit it to make a lodgment in her mind, and taking the children, went to hear the fiddle.

For some reason unknown to Mr. Erskine, the blacks, for some time past, did not evince as great a willingness to work. Daily becoming more slack, he directed the overseer to have a talk with them, and ascertain whether the change in their conduct proceeded from any particular cause. Accordingly, on the day in question, the slaves were bidden by the overseer to meet him at the elms. Hector, Cæsar, Jeff, and all the rest—save Uncle Tom—were ignorant of the purpose, and he, even, knew not the precise object. He

was enlightened more by suspicion than actual knowledge, as we shall soon discover.

They were directed to be on the ground as early as the hour of two in the afternoon. Mr. Gravity was punctual, but they were not all there until long after the time appointed. Indeed, Jeff was so tardy that the overseer began to suspect that he would not be present. Uncle Tom chuckled at his absence, and hoped that it would be prolonged until Mr. Gravity, with his patience exhausted, returned to the house.

"You are growing lazy, Jeff—lazy—very lazy," said the overseer, as the fiddler came sauntering along.

"Dunno, mass'r."

"You should have been here more than an hour ago; you have kept us waiting."

"Sorry, massa; dat nigger dar," pointing to Uncle Tom, "said you nam'd dis time for de meetin', or I should not hab danced de women so long."

"That fiddle will be the death of you, unless you pay more attention to your work, Jeff. The good book tells us that there is a time for all things, for all men; but I am fearful that you are left out."

"I will saw the brisker, mass'r, to make up for lost hour. He is ready; so, nigger, git on de track," replied Jeff, with the impression that they were under the elms for a frolic; and, at the same time tuning the strings of his instrument.

Mr. Gravity perceived that the fiddler mistook the reason why they were called there; but, perhaps he would attain his object better by allowing instinct to have its way; and so, without appearing in the least

disconcerted, he replied, "Lose no time, my boys, but up, and strive who shall be called the nimblest and longest-winded."

The word was no sooner given than Jeff commenced, and all commenced, and such a reel those old, tall, wide-spreading and low-bough trees never before witnessed. It seemed, too, to Mr. Gravity, that it would never come to an end. It was certainly full half an hour before the music ceased a moment, and equally untiring were the feet of the dancers. Finally they stopped to take breath, and the overseer, availing himself of the interval, remarked, "Boys, if you would work as heartily as you dance, the corn would soon be garnered; I wish I could say as much."

They all giggled, and showed their teeth, which, in contrast with their jet black faces, appeared remarkably white. Uncle Tom laughed outright; and Jeff, without seeming to notice the suggestion, again struck up a very familiar air. Like the sound of the bugle, in calling the men of the heath or high road together, it brought them to their places again, and before Mr. Gravity had time to add another remark, away they hopped, jumped, and danced, without regard to step or measure.

Mr. Gravity concluded that he must adopt some new mode of imparting the instructions with which the planter had charged him, or fail to do his duty. He beckoned several times to Jeff, to hold his bow, but the slave was either too much taken up with the merriment, or did not comprehend. It was of no use. Finally, he ran out from under the shade of the trees

to the brink of the bank of the river, and, for some minutes, gazed with intense earnestness upon the water below. Jeff noticed the overseer, and wondered what it could be that attracted his attention. He could not control his eager curiosity to know, and with hardly more than one bound, he sprung to his side.

"Wha', mass'r! wha' d'ye see down thar?" he instantly inquired, unwilling to lose one moment's observation.

"Not anything," Mr. Gravity calmly replied.

"Noffin! mass'r?"

"Yes. Do n't disturb me."

"Thinkin', mass'r? Thinkin'?"

"To be sure I am. Would you know what?"

"Speak um, mass'r—speak um."

"How busy the pickerel are! See them dart through the water; no laziness, Jeff, there."

"Natur', mass'r; dat dis nigger calls natur'."

"D'ye think, my trusty man, those tiny beings were intended to act differently from all other animate creation?"

"You hab de start of me, now; I do n't take. Please mass'r, explain dat remark."

"Why, are you so ignorant? have you heard the gospel to so little profit? Have you not heard the preacher, time and again, say, at the oaks, that the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea were typical of similar instinctive attributes among both men and beasts?"

"Yas — O yas."

"It is unnatural, then, for me or you to shirk our

work; and when I grow lazy, I feel I am wronging massa, and outraging the God that made me."

"Berry good, mass'r Gravity."

"And when that is my feeling, I always reproach myself, and go into the woods you see yonder, and look at the birds as they fly nimbly from bush to bush; or come to the river, as now, and observe the trout and pike as they skim along the surface of the water, or plunging into it at my feet, in a moment show themselves at some other point. The lesson teaches me to be industrious, and I ply myself to work with more zeal and greater contentment."

The rest of the slaves came to a halt when the music ceased, and following Jeff, heard what the overseer said, in profound silence.

"Mass'r Gravity, is dat de real object of your calling us to de elms dis arternoon?" inquired Jeff, after a pause.

"Do you not think it was necessary?"

"Dunno, mass'r."

"Have not all of you hung back in the field, and shown less disposition to hurry the work? You confess it in your looks; and the corn is on the hill when it should be in the stack. What d'ye think massa will say?"

"I s'pects stipend will be decreased," said Uncle Tom, as if he did not care if it was.

"No, no; dat will neber do. We must finish the work next week without fail," remarked Hector, appearing to be ashamed that this reproof was deserved.

"What say you all?" asked the overseer.

The desire to keep the wages up, by better behavior, was universally assented to, with the exception of Uncle Tom. He turned his head aside, and made no response; he looked as if disappointed.

"Shall yours be kept up to the mark?" said the overseer to him.

"As massa may think best," he replied, with sullenness.

Mr. Gravity was surprised, and again turned his eyes to the water. Uncle Tom, to draw him out further, added, in an ironical voice, "Dis nigger alwars did his duty—he am no slouch, an' massa know'd dat years ago. He can't work foreber; 't is not right, 'less he reaps all de fruits himself. Dare, you hab my notion."

"Let Uncle Tom alone; he thinks of noffin but Kanon," said Cæsar, disposed to act as a pacificator.

"Confound the schoolmaster! the blame is upon him," replied the overseer, and, sensible that further parley at this time would be useless, expressed a wish that they would reform, and be early at work on Monday morning.

CHAPTER XXI.

HIS DETERMINATION TO GO TO THE "STATE OF FREEDOM."

The discontented negro returned from the elms to the quarters disheartened. Why could not his companions appreciate the glorious "state of freedom?" was the question which he asked himself repeatedly; and the involuntary response uniformly was, "be content with thy lot."

Uncle Tom was aware of the indolence of his fellow-slaves, for he was instrumental in producing it. He constantly harped upon their hardships, magnified every fault of the planter, and resorted to all the means that his ingenuity could devise, to create alienation and uneasiness. He watched, as intently as ever snake did the harmless bird perched upon a tree, the effect of his efforts. He noticed their dilatoriness, and took courage; he observed the annoyance it occasioned the overseer; and when the appointment at the elms was named, he flattered himself with the hope that the crisis had come. He expected a lecture full of curses in the old fashioned way; a reduction of the gratuity

threatened, and the way fully prepared for a revolt. The sterling good sense of Mr. Gravity, acting in obedience to the command of the proprietor of the estate, prompted the pursuit of an entirely different course to reach a remedy for the evil. And when it was too plain not to be perceived, that Cæsar and Jeff—to say nothing of Hector—were disposed “to mend their ways,” he was satisfied that the rest would follow the example, and all desire to change their condition would be banished from their minds, and perhaps for ever.

Uncle Tom met Dinah that evening, at supper, in a far different mood from what he was when she left him, in the afternoon, to hear Jeff’s fiddle.

“Tommy, my dear, what now? You guine to be ugly agin, wid your own Dinah?”

“Feelin’s—feelin’s ar’ on—neber go away.”

“Whar’ you bin?”

“D’ye recollect, last spring massa gib um a big dance by the river side?”

“When you was shut up in dat ole hovel?”

“Yas—yas.”

“I shall neber in my life lose the memory of dat circumstance. Oh! it makes me shudder now to think of it.”

“Dat’s whar’ I bin.”

“Pray, Tommy, what was dar to stir you up? It’s a quick turn you made; why, you hab not looked so much like your ownself since dat dance, as you did this arternoon; an’ now you so much changed!”

“Dis nigger’s integrity is too large to stan’ sich treatment.”

"I s'pose you could not help thinkin' how you war' punished?"

"Pshaw! sich little things do n't trouble me; bigger ones in my mind—more important—looking more to the future, as mass'r Bates would say."

"Well, I cannot imagine what ye think 'bout—'less, 'less—"

"Ah! I knows wha' you guine to say now, Dinah."

"Freedom?"

"De same."

"Hab you not gib um up yet? I seed now de cause of your feelin's; sorry you can not git rid of um."

"Neber mention dat agin; I will alwars hold on to it."

"Then mark what I was sayin', Tommy; then, you will be miserable for all time to come. Gib um up at once."

"I am determined to be a free man."

"One thing to say—quite different to do. You said dat afore; too old and cross. You can neber save enough to buy your liberty of massa."

"Nor will I ever do sich foolish thing."

"La, me! you do n't 'spect to ever run off North, d' ye?"

"Dinah, mark what I now say to you, in de strictest confidence: I shall not see our cabin arter to-morrow night!"

"Why, how you talk!" exclaimed Dinah, her eyes moistening with tears.

"Now, do n't take on so; it's no use."

"But, you can not fetch me an' de children; you

could hardly contrive how to do so when mass'r Bates was here to help; now we are alone, an' wid no friend to help us in our hour of need."

"Hab I not feet to walk on, an' legs to run with, an' can I not fetch myself?"

"Tommy, would you really leave us all in slavery, wid no prospect of ever being otherwise; an' you, at de same time, your own master and happy? No, no! too soft-hearted for sich conduct."

"Believe, I shall not desert you. When I am safely housed in de 'state of freedom,' you will hear from me, in de shape of a letter filled with money—plenty of money."

"I had rather see you than the money."

"So you shall see me. Money will carry you, in flying colors, through all troubles, an' over all quagmires, no matter how deep."

"Do you mean that I shall then come to you, wid our dear children?"

"Noffin less dan dat."

"Ah, ha! my heart aches to think of it. A wild plan—never can be carried out," said Dinah, shaking her head, and moving back from the table. "To-morrow am Sunday—de Lor's day—do not go then," she added, "wait 'till Monday, an' I will help you."

He paused a moment.

"On Monday, then," he said, and the conversation here dropped.

Late in the afternoon of next day, Philisee came running into the cabin, and before she had been there five minutes, stated that Miss Mary had just then

looked in upon her, and gave her calico enough for a new frock.

"La, suz! she gib me one last week, wid compliments of our good ole massa."

"Do you recollect our ole missus, Dinah?"

"Oh! bless her! mebbe I hab forgot her! No, no! never — never! Did n't she alwars come an' look in, an' sit down; and when we war sick, comfort us, an' deal out de medicine?"

"Yes, Dinah; an' when ole disease broke up, she would send Pompey wid some wine, an' insist upon our takin' all we could wish. She is in heaven among de saints; an', as you mention her,—would you believe it?—I actually—it is as true as I now sit here, I saw her in my sleep last night!"

"Pooh! you wench, do n't turn Dinah's head topsyturvey wid dreams; there is enough of reality, without making up stuff," interposed Uncle Tom, who desired to terminate the conversation so happily in progress.

"La! Tommy, my ole head is too solid. I believe we see our spirits, though; they watch over us for our good."

"I wish, den, you an' Philisee could see one spirit for me."

"What's dat?" eagerly inquired the latter.

"De mighty spirit of liberty! Dat would be sensible."

This exclamation was uttered so solemnly, accompanied with such a wild, demoniac look, that Philisee was terrified, and shrieked. Her scream was so

piercing, it reached the ears of her husband in a neighboring yard, and he flew to her assistance.

"She has fainted — throw water in her face — it will revive her," said Dinah, handing him a cup. He disdainfully dashed it away, and lifting up her head, he carried her in his arms into the open air. The fresh breeze restored the negress to consciousness, and she begged to be taken home.

"Who struck you?" asked Hector; "tell me quick, I'm in haste to return the blow."

"No one. Uncle Tom was talkin' of Kanon; he is a perfect fury on dat subject. Let me git out of his sight."

"D'ye see what a muss your feelin's make?" said Dinah, after Philisee and her husband left the veranda.

"No harm to me; it may do good to them. Let the wench ponder de thought ober, so dat when you come arter me she may be inclined to bear you company."

"That day will not come. You will talk, but you can not find the way; it is a long road, an' the corners and windings ar' many, an' difficult to travel. The wolves will howl, an' the serpents will bite. If you eber git dar, the cold will freeze you stiff, an' no more on earth will be heard of poor Uncle Tom. Abandon your feelin's, an' think of home."

"You waste your words, Dinah."

"Here lie the bones of your good old father an' mother —"

"Stop right dar!" said the slave, the floodgates of pure love bursting their barriers at the mention of

those hallowed names, and hot tears fast trickling down his attenuated cheeks.

“Wid a good white fence, to keep off ebery animal an’ profane intruder. And dar you see,” she continued, “de smooth marble dat massa put in the ground, to notify our children, an’ their children, an’ all our blood, of de place whar’ repose de remains of their ancestors. — Oh! will you forsake um all, to lie down in a strange land, wid none to close your eyes, or watch your spirit as it ascends — ah! I know not whar’ — away off to de North? If you would not tear out my heart, think no more of your ‘state of freedom.’”

The slave was so much excited, he, for a moment or two, did not dare to trust his tongue. He silently gazed, alternately upon his wife and children as they lay in the low bed. He soon collected himself, wiped away the teardrops that lingered upon the face, and rising up from his chair, stepped toward a picture of Jesus nailed to the cross, knelt down, and exclaimed in a mild but determined voice, “I swear by the blood of my Saviour, if I live to see de sun go behind ole hills to morrow, I will take de road to freedom!” and returned to the table.

“Foolish man! you will famish by the way. Oh! I beg of you, remain ’tented at home. You know not whar’ you go; I fear dar am a deep sea of trouble afore you,” was the unflinching response of an affectionate wife.

“De road may be — what did mass’r Bates call um? ah, dis nigger hab a good memory — intricate, somewhat; more than once I shall take a wrong turning,

an' perhaps be forced to take back my steps ; but Knowing the distance I hab to perform, I shall not hurry my horse too much. Fortune will favor me, depend upon it, Dinah ; an' I shall finally reach de promised land, wid my head erect, and at a slashing trot."

"You'd best quicken your pace, then, if you're bent upon makin' de trial, for thar may be them a coming arter you, dat may stop your getting away quite so easy ; and, I s'pose you hab weighed um well in your mind—if you ar' cotch'd stealin' de horse, Winchester jail will be your home for many a long day."

"Mistaken already, Dinah. Abe—good Abe—furnishes de horse. I do n't take massa's."

"So be it, if you will go ; but I know'd you will not eber be in my sight again."

"Be of good cheer ; stick to your integrity, an' Tommy and Dinah will sit some day under their own vine and fig tree in de 'state of freedom,'" gaily said the slave.

The wife assured him of her coöperation in making his escape, and he retired early to bed.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ESCAPE.

Next day's sun did not rise earlier than Uncle Tom. With a beating heart and throbbing pulse, he went through the various chores, and anxious to devote the entire portion of the day in making preparations, he feigned sickness, and did not, as usual, go to the field. Worn out by a night which care had rendered almost sleepless, he hastily swallowed a cup of milk, and turning away from the untasted eatables, flung himself upon the bed.

Dinah, glad to see her husband rest, would not disturb him; and when, in the course of an hour, the overseer called to learn the reason of his absence, she pointed to the bed, for an answer. It was enough.

"If your husband feels no better when he awakes, let Joe come and tell me," said Mr. Gravity.

"Yas, mass'r, I will be sure to do that," quickly replied Dinah, thankful that the overseer did not mistrust the trick.

He slept soundly, and it was mid-day when he awoke. The repose refreshed him: he got up and ate

a hearty meal. It was a busy afternoon, and the shades of evening were close upon the day ere his arrangements were perfected. Luckily, he had not been disturbed by visitors or loungers. The men were at work, and the women engaged in washing. He had a clear field and an open sky, and he improved the time. Dinah packed his clothes in as small a compass as possible; indeed, there were not many to carry, as he proposed to take only what might be necessary for actual use—he did not wish to be incumbered. Besides, he entertained no doubt but that he should easily replenish his scanty wardrobe, as soon as he reached the happy land. And when night actually set in, he believed himself ready to set off on the journey.

Notwithstanding “his feelings,” he had a desire to take a parting look at his master, and he sauntered over to the house. He pretended that he came to thank the overseer for his attention in the morning, and after announcing that his sickness was over, said he should be able to recommence work the next day. This was welcome intelligence to all, and especially to Mr. Erskine, who concluded that the slave intended to act better and work with more will.

It was after nine o'clock; all was still at the quarters—no lights were to be seen at the mansion. The slave and his wife were sitting in their cabin, each anxious for the proper time to arrive, and yet wishing it to be deferred as long as possible. The hour had at length come. He must then leave, or never. Summoning all his fortitude, he broke the silence by whispering, “he must go.”

"Oh! Tommy, Tommy!" exclaimed Dinah, and covered her face and eyes with her apron.

"Hush! hush! you will wake up the children wid your sobbing. I can not bear dat now! if I should see their eyes, I'm afeerd I could not stir," he said, and at once slung "the pack" upon his shoulders.

"An' must you, Tommy—must you now leave us?"

"Pluck, my good woman; now, if ever, let me know your pluck. No whimpering: look sorrow plump in de face. I must go."

"Oh! I fear our days are few, and full of sorrow!"

"No, Dinah, no. From this minute commences our happiness. We will now think of freedom, an' soon shall hab um."

"Dunno; I can't believe it, so contrary to natur."

"Pooh! I feel um in my bones."

"But, I fear me, dat we ar' doin' wrong in sight of our Divine Master. I can't think otherwise. It gibs me much trouble. Oh! I 'm afraid you ar' wild, Tommy."

"You jist mentioned, Dinah, de berry thing that justifies us. We hab but one mass'r, an' he is 'bove de earth. We are not boun' to serve mass'r Erskine, if we do not eat his substance. We shall work for ourselves, an' live upon ourselves: what injury, den, do we to him, as we ar' accountable only to God, who breathed into us de breath of life? No, no; make yourself easy on dat subject. All right, if we can only get to the land prepared for us; dat accomplished, and our anxiety is at an end."

"Oh! be careful of yourself: if sick, take medicine;

be not wasteful wid your new clothes, and send word to poor Dinah how you am, and when she shall overtake you."

"Trust me for dat," he answered, and with a slight tremulousness in his voice, requested the candle to be blown out.

"It will throw a light into the yard as I open de door," he added, and after hugging and kissing his wife, he said "good bye," and softly opening the door wide enough to get out, crept along by the side of the fence to the highway.

An unexpected obstacle here interrupted his progress. He heard the distant rattling of carriage wheels, and the sound seemed to be down the road, in the direction he proposed to travel. It would not do for him to be seen at the dead of night in his present plight: it would be suspicious. He might then, perhaps, be taken up. And besides, he did not care to have it known the next day, which way he went. He walked on, and soon was near enough to satisfy himself that the vehicle was approaching him. Clouds overcast the heavens, and the moon rose late. He turned into the lane, and notwithstanding it was very dark, proceeded down it some distance, lest the dog that might accompany the traveler should bark, if he crouched under the fence by the wayside.

It turned out to be a gig, with a gentleman and lady, and in a moment or two passed by. The slave reëntered the road, and pushed on as fast as his legs could carry him. Nothing occurred to disturb his midnight walk, and when the heralds of morning began

to purple the horizon in the east, he was several miles below the village of Millwood. His intention was to reach Abe's barn before daylight, and there rest until evening. He hurried his pace as it grew light; but when the sun was up, he was several miles off from Winchester, and he did not dare to trust himself longer on the public thoroughfare. There was a narrow clearing between the road and the woods, and he jumped across the ditch and hedge, and hid himself in the thicket.

The fugitive was glad enough to lie down and rest his weary limbs. But he did not know who might chance to come and pounce upon his defenceless body; he must not, therefore, indulge himself in the luxury of a sleep, and the effort, constantly, to keep awake, made it the more difficult to keep his eyes open. He ate his corncake, and drank liberally of the milk that Dinah bottled for his use. Exhausted with watchfulness, he finally stretched himself at full length upon the ground, and fell into a slumber.

Towards noon he awoke, and opening his eyes, he saw standing before him a lad, with a basket suspended upon his arm. He started to his feet so suddenly that the lad was frightened, and scampered to get out of his sight.

"Hallo! you little nigger, you!" cried Uncle Tom, unwilling to part company so. He was fearful that the lad might run and tell what he had seen; but the youngster was too frightened to stop. This would never do, thought the fugitive, and he ran after him. The underbrush, however, was thick, and the limbs

of the trees were low, and the lad had the advantage. Uncle Tom gave up the chase, and returned to his hiding-place. He remained undisturbed the residue of the afternoon; and the privacy would have been lonely and irksome, but his mind was constantly on the alert, and full of anticipated scenes.

Immediately after nightfall, he issued forth from the woods, and made his way to the road. This was imprudent, for he was in danger of being seen when he entered it, and probably would meet more or less persons, so early in the evening. He was in too urgent haste, however, to get on further from the plantation of his master before the sun should show himself again. His pace was rapid, for he desired to reach the barn ere his friend, the hostler, closed it for the night. Two hours walk, he thought, would bring him to the city, and the result of this extra exertion showed that he was not so much mistaken in his anticipation. He saw many lights as he entered the suburbs, and taking one of the back streets proceeded as fast and noiselessly as he could, to Abe's quarters. Fortunately, the hostler was detained later than usual, and was readily found.

"Come at last, hab you?" he said, as the fugitive came to the stall where he was currying and brushing off a horse.

"Yas, Abe, my friend."

"Why war you not here last night—any accident?"

"Too far—too long walk for one night—slept during the day nine or ten miles back. I'm all right."

"Well, git up on de hay-mow, till I hab clean'd dis hoss, an' I 'll attend to you."

The fugitive complied cheerfully with this order, and took a lunch.

"Here 's some bacon an' oder fixin's ; make a supper of them, for you will be hungry, riding all night," said Abe as he ascended the ladder.

"Thank 'ee, I hab jist made my supper from some articles dat Dinah put up for me."

"Well, throw um, then, into the saddlebags ; keep all you can git."

Uncle Tom and Abe had known each other intimately from boyhood. There was more than a simple "good fellow-feeling" existing between them. They had played and romped together as boys, danced and attended "merry-makings" in company as they advanced in years, and although the latter, by possessing more enterprise, and from good luck, acquired means enough to buy his freedom several years before, yet their intimacy continued unbroken, and the free man took a lively interest in the welfare of the slave. Consequently, Abe readily seconded the efforts of his friend to run away, and did not hesitate to offer all the aid in his power.

It was arranged between them that the hostler should loan the fugitive a horse, and after he reached the "state of freedom," he should remit him fifty dollars therefor. This would enable the slave to widen the distance faster between himself and his master ; and if he should find it difficult to beg hay and provender after he traveled far on his way, he could sell

the animal to the best advantage, and with the money obtained upon the sale, hire his passage in some public conveyance.

The beast was ready when the fugitive reached the barn, and as there was no time to be lost, he was soon saddled and bridled, and the bags containing clothing and provisions fastened to the seat. Uncle Tom descended the ladder to mount into the saddle.

"It is necessary that you should daub your face with flour, so that you may not be taken for a colored man. It will last you until out of the city. I will give you my permit to use when you get out. I can get a new one," said the hostler.

"I don't understand this?"

"Why, no color'd man has a right to be out arter dark, here in Winchester, unless permitted by master, or if free, has de evidence thereof in his possession. So, do as I tell you."

The fugitive whitened his face as directed, and thanking his friend in the warmest terms, bid him farewell.

"Remember, now, your name is Abe," said the hostler, and the fugitive, nodding assent, rode out of the barn.

The heavens were clear and full of stars, and lighted him on his way. The beast moved over the ground at good speed, and long before morning, he was far from the county of Frederick, and riding rapidly on toward the northern limits of the state. Abe was well acquainted with the country for some distance, and gave his friend particular directions as to the course he should pursue.

Fortune, for the first time, as he thought, now favored him. He was unmolested, and took courage. He had money enough to buy forage for several days. He traveled the main road, believing that he should be less liable to suspicion. He stopped at an unpretending inn, to rest and feed, near the usual time for breakfast. He was treated like other travelers; and after an hour's repose, remounted and pursued his journey. It so happened that he had struck upon a turnpike, and after riding a short distance, came to a gate. By a regulation then in force in that precinct, it was incumbent upon the keeper to know the authority under which the fugitive was traveling the high road.

"Your name?" said he, as he came out of the lodge to raise the gate for the traveler to pass.

"Tom—Uncle Tom," was the prompt reply.

"Are you free?"

"Yas, yas; I can go as I like."

"Let me see the warrant."

He handed the gate-tender the paper which Abe gave him.

"What is this?" said the gate-tender, turning it over with an air of surprise. "Where did you get it from, my good fellow? what does it mean? I do n't understand this, at all."

"From Winchester," replied the slave, disconcerted.

"From Winchester?" repeated the gate-tender, with a similar air of surprise, for the purpose of making the black think it was a different paper,—supposing that he could not read, or he would not be so simple as to

give his name different from the one written in the document.

"Yas, mass'r, jist so," the slave affirmed, with an innocent look. The gate-tender turned it over again.

"I understood you to give your name as Tom; am I right, my good fellow?"

The mistake flashed upon his mind, and the last injunction of the hostler came fresh to his memory. His heart, which a moment before was buoyant with hope, sunk within him, and he scarcely had courage to answer. If he had been white, this sudden despondency would have stood out in bold relief upon his visage; as it was, his black face served as an admirable visor to conceal his real emotions. He coughed, and gained time to think, and then faintly stammered out, "No, massa, Abe am the correct name."

"Ah, ha! that does not correspond with the name here given in this document! A mistake—perhaps cheat—somewhere," said the gate-tender, knowing well enough that he did not misunderstand, and from the horseman's procrastination in answering, mistrustful that there was something wrong. So he thought he would be justified in pretending that the name given the second time was also not correct, if the paper was to be relied upon by the black for his passport. The slave had good sense enough to know it was policy to adhere to the name he gave last, and "lie it through."

"I told you, sir, my name war Abe. It war Abe from de beginning; it will be Abe foreber. Gib me back my permit, an' let me pass; here 's your change—

slaves hab no money!" said he, with remarkable self-possession.

"Don't they! The devil take me, if they don't, now-a-days, have more money than the whites, in these parts. I do n't know what has got into the masters. There was a time when I could tell whether a nigger was a slave or not, the moment I saw him; but the free are getting to be as thick and common as white folks."

"Dis nigger cares not to hear your speech; he has a great way to travel, an' am in a hurry; so hoist your gate, an' let me pass on."

"But, my good fellow, answer me honestly this: did you not give your name as Tom — Uncle Tom — when you first rode up? Now, no deception."

"Pshaw! white man, no; do you s'pose dat I am guine to palm myself off for somebody else? De thought neber entered dis nigger's head. I am not asham'd to own myself anywhar'."

"Be jabbers, though, you said Tom — Uncle Tom."

"Oh! — ah! I remembers; I said — I meant to hab said — dat Tom, my excellent friend, brought it to me from de court house at Winchester; da's it."

"When?"

"I disremember de time — no matter; I put myself on the defensive; make de most of um. I'll complain of yer detaining me unlawfully, if de gate am not immediately run up."

The gate tender verily believed that the negro had crossed himself; but he had no evidence, and possibly he was mistaken. The stage was coming rapidly up, and without more ado, he gave the negro the paper,

and pulled the rope. The fugitive passed under the gate, and putting spurs to his horse rode on at a fast trot. The animal was not sure-footed, and descending a hill, a mile or two distant from the gate, stumbled and fell upon his side, jamming one of the slave's legs quite badly. After a little delay, he got the horse upon his feet again, and pushed forward, but not as briskly. The pain from the bruise increased, and in a short time it became so poignant that he found himself compelled—much against his inclination—to halt, and ask for assistance. Upon examination, the ankle appeared to be dislocated; he was offered the hospitality of the house into which he chanced to wander, and a physician kindly sent for.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PURSUIT.

On the second day after Uncle Tom bade farewell to the cabin, the following was posted on the corners of the principal streets in the city of Winchester:

RUNAWAY—\$100 REWARD.

My slave Tom—familiarily known as Uncle Tom—escaped from my plantation, as near as I can ascertain, night before the last. Whoever shall restore him to my possession, will be entitled to the above reward.

The slave is forty-five years of age; color, jet black; built stout; about five feet four inches in height; scar on the forehead, above the right eye; limps in his walk; carries his head high, and usually very talkative.

JAMES ERSKINE,
Of Oakland, near Millwood.

The handbill attracted the attention of the passers, and many stopped to peruse it. There was one posted

upon Abe's barn, it being a public place; and in the course of two or three hours—such circulation did this item of news have—many of the free colored people of the town had congregated there, each desirous to know whether the other possessed any information on the subject, and freely discussing the direction the runaway might have taken, and the probability of his recapture.

Mr. Gravity was aware of the intimacy existing between the hostler and fugitive; and hoping that the former might, at some time, casually drop a hint to his comrades, if he did, in fact, know anything of the whereabouts of the latter, the overseer employed one of the citizens, who was accustomed to trade and traffic in the barter of horses, to court his company, and loiter about the premises as much as he properly could, without creating a suspicion of his purpose, and to report, at short intervals, to the planter at the tavern, what he might happen to hear.

The citizen was well acquainted with Abe, and experienced no inconvenience in whiling away the time. He laughed and joked, and was so full of witticism, as to throw the blacks, and Abe also, entirely off their guard. Queerly enough, Abe, some two months before, purchased of this citizen the horse which carried Uncle Tom out of town. In looking around, the citizen did not perceive the horse in question, and naturally inquired of the hostler if he had parted with him.

"Yas," said he, without evincing any disposition to mention the particulars.

"How much did you make on the trade, jockey?"

"Do n't be too inquisitive," he bluntly replied.

"Ah! lost; well, you must drive a better bargain the next time."

"Who told you dis nigger lost? He know'd noffin, eeny way," said the negro, his temper beginning to rise at such a reflection upon his sagacity.

"These little fellars up here," said the citizen, pointing to his brains.

"Berry good, you can inform um dat I got what I wanted, an' it am none of yer business; so git along."

"When did you part with the animal, Abe?"

"Not long since."

"I am sorry I did not know you would sell; for I would have liked to have had the refusal of the beast. Good wind and sure-footed. By the way, how was his flesh?"

"Round as a barrel — plump — neber look'd better."

"What a pity that I did not hear of it! Why, I should have thought I must heard of your disposition to sell; I'm passing here 'most every day," remarked the citizen, apparently very sorry that he lost the chance.

"I do n't alwars make a sign of myself," replied the hostler, walking into one of the stalls.

"Who bought the critter? perhaps I can get him now."

"Oh! I sold um to one of my friends, for a family horse; he would n't part wid de beast now, for any sum — dat I does know."

"You can tell me where the purchaser lives? Perhaps, now, I can make a rap; I have did such things many a time, though it had a bad look when I opened."

“I did n’t ax de question.”

“Ah! I nderstand; he was a stranger in these parts.”

“Appeared to be traveling—chanced along here,” replied the hostler; and started off whistling into the street.

“There is necromancy somewhere,” said the citizen, in an under-tone. As he could not continue the conversation, he proceeded to the tavern, to report to the planter.

To return to the plantation. We can not say that Mr. Erskine was at all astonished, when he heard, the next day, that Tom had gone off. He was expecting some such trouble, although he hoped to avert it by generous treatment. The intelligence, however, reached him so quick, he flattered himself that he should be able to recover his property. The information leaked out oddly. It appeared, that when Dinah got up in the morning, such was her sense of guilt in conniving at the escape, and wilfully blinding the eyes of the overseer, the day before, by falsely pretending that her husband was sick,—added to that feeling of utter loneliness, which came over her as she sat down to eat her breakfast,—that she wept bitterly herself, and aroused a kindred sensation in the bosoms of the children. The unusual wailing, at so early an hour, caught the ears of Hector passing by, and fearful that some sudden calamity had befallen this humble household, he looked in, and, to his perfect astonishment, beheld Dinah stretched upon the bed, the children on their knees in front of it, and all in tears, writhing in the

deepest sorrow. Anxious for the cause, and ready to do all in his power to allay the grief, he demanded to be informed immediately. The distracted woman scarcely knew what she said. Taking pity on her helpless condition, he asked where her husband was, and received for answer that he had gone North. Hector consoled her as well as he could, and went to the overseer, to inform him of the occurrence.

The field and work was abandoned for the day, and all hands were busy to ascertain the particular direction taken by the runaway slave. They tracked him for a mile or two on the road, and then lost sight of him. Whether he had taken to the open lots, to avoid pursuit, or hidden in the woods, rested in conjecture. One thing was certain, he would make his way northward; and believing that he was not many miles off, the planter deemed it advisable to proceed to Winchester, and give public notice of his loss. He made inquiries there, but had not, up to this time, derived any reliable information. He heard that some person saw a strange negro in one of the back streets, the evening previous; but the individual could not be found, and he remained in the dark as much as ever. It was under these circumstances, that the citizen had been employed as a spy; and Mr. Erskine was now—it being near noon—awaiting at his room for news. A rap on the outside of the door signified that some person desired admission, and he rose to welcome the visitor. It was the overseer and citizen.

“What have you learned?” he immediately asked.

“Enough to set me thinking,” replied the citizen,

who at once rehearsed, as minutely as he could recollect, what passed between himself and the hostler.

"Suspicious, I must confess, very suspicious. Not sufficient to found an accusation upon, however. We must know more; can you not obtain more information at the bar? The clerk may recollect the stranger."

"That has already been done; but nothing worth mentioning is known there," replied the citizen.

"Well, what is your advice?"

"I would despatch some person forward, without delay."

"He has a good start."

"Yes; but with relay of horses, he will be overhauled in the course of the next eight and forty hours."

"What do you say, Mr. Gravity?"

"It is the only course to take."

"If your suspicion is well founded, I must engage your services," said Mr. Erskine to the citizen.

"I am at your service, sir; but the overseer would be more apt to track the nigger. Besides, I might not know him, from the advertisement, even if I should see him."

"Yes, but you know the horse, and can easier describe the animal as you proceed along the road."

"I think," remarked Mr. Gravity, "that we both should go. I can describe and know the runaway, and our friend here can describe and know the horse. No mistake will then be made, in either case."

"Very good; be it as you say. When shall you start?"

"Immediately after dinner, as our horses can then be in readiness."

"Is this agreeable to you?" said the planter to the citizen.

"Certainly; I'm ready at any hour," he replied.

"We will consider it so arranged. Be thorough, and ride hard and late."

"How far shall we follow?" asked the overseer.

"As your own judgment may dictate, Mr. Gravity," said Mr. Erskine, and filled the overseer's purse with money. The pursuers left the city immediately after dinner, the planter concluding to remain there quietly for a few days, and if the runaway was still south of that point, to be ready to act as circumstances might suggest.

The hostler was not pleased with his interview with the citizen. He was fearful that he might have gone too far, and watched his movements. He observed him and the overseer, whom he knew perfectly well, as they left the tavern; and perceiving that they took the high road that lead to the northward, he became more uneasy, lest he might have said something that compromised himself. He thought Tom had a good start, however, and would hold his own.

"They are arter him," said he to a free negro standing by his side, "but blame me if they cotch up. He is over a hundred miles on de way. Now 's de time to know how much nigger am worth."

"They won't cotch him, for anoder reason."

"What 's dat?"

"Kase Uncle Tom am not fool 'nough to stick to big road. He will shy um, depend on 't."

"Do n't know 'bout dat; I advised him to keep straight on, for he would make better time than to take crooked paths."

"*You—you* advised Tom! Den you know'd it, hey?"

"Pshaw! you am no fool. Wouldn't you help a brother nigger, if you was applied to?"

"O yas. I was only glad dat I know'd um; no harm done."

"Now, look here, ole fellar! you guine to blab? kase if you say you would, I 'll choke you right on de spot," said the hostler, and suiting the action to the word, seized hold of the shirt collar.

"No, no; dis child will not expose you. Hands off."

At this juncture, a gentleman advanced in years stopped at the door of the barn, and pretended to be engaged reading the notice. Abe recognized him, and in a low undertone remarked, "Dat am mass'r Erskine, or I misjudge. Bless my stars, how gray he has grown! He looks twenty years older!"

"Am dat individual Tom's master?"

"Yas, an' he is comin' in, arter he reads the notice. Dar, he is comin' now; hold your tongue—I 'll do the talkin'."

The planter walked in, to see what he could learn.

"Good day, mass'r Erskine," said Abe.

"Ah! you know me, do you?"

"Of course I do, jist as well as I know myself."

"I entertained hopes of finding Tom here," remarked the planter, in a bland voice.

"I hab seen noffin of him; gone in some oder direction."

"You and he were such good friends, I did not know but that he might come to you for help, and be advised to return home."

"No, sir; noffin of de kind."

"I knew well enough that you would be the last person to encourage him to run away," continued the planter, as if he had the utinost confidence in the hostler's sincerity.

"Tom know'd better than dat. I abide de law."

"So I am aware; hence, you had the enterprise and honesty to work, until you amassed a sum sufficient to *buy* freedom, and not cheat your master."

"Yes, sir; I am my own man, as free as your honor."

"Oh, certainly, and that is the best passport you can have to the society of the sober-minded and industrious."

"I earned um, sir."

"Then I am to find myself mistaken; you have not seen my man Tom?"

"Not at all, sir, he took some oder route."

"If you should happen to see him, I shall feel myself much obliged, if you would inform me."

"Dat I can safely promise to do."

"How you hab lied!" remarked the negro, who was listening to the conversation, to Abe, after Mr. Erskine had gone out of the barn.

"Pooh! justifiable — perfectly justifiable. Do you s'pose dat I am boun' to tell all I knows, at any time, an' especially now? No, nigger, no."

"Tom is foolish to leave sich a master; I know'd he is a kind man, from his talk."

"I am satisfied of one thing."

"Wha' dat?"

"They think Tom hab guine northward. I 'm afeerd they will gib him hot time. I believe mass'r Erskine mistrusts. No matter, I 'll keep a good look out."

"Dunno."

"Can't we deceive him? Let us see: s'pose you go to the tavern, an' pretend you see Tom go west, on foot. It will knock um; we shall hear no more 'bout ole horse."

"What good will that do? The two gemmen will ride on; it will make no difference."

"We can try de experiment; it will make matters no worse."

"No, I believe not; I do n't like deception. I shall not hoax any one in this matter—too serious."

"Perfectly justifiable; I 'll do it myself, then. But, do you recollect, no blabbing!"

"Dat I 'll remember. I hope, arter all, Tom will get free."

"An' you will not lend a helping hand?"

"It's none of my business. I earn'd mine; all of um could, if they war not so confounded lazy, an' so spendthrift wid what money they do git. Depend on't, Abe, de road you and I took to get to freedom, am de only honest one. Let de niggers all travel same way; it's open to all."

Abe shook his head—as much as to say, he and his friend were exceptions to the general rule—and as he could derive no consolation or encouragement from his companion, dropped the conversation. The planter

went back to his room, satisfied that the hostler knew more than he was willing to tell, and convinced that he had adopted wise counsel in sending Mr. Gravity forward. Possibly, however, his slave's hiding-place was nearer than he was aware of; he therefore determined to use discretion, and reconnoiter.

In the meantime, Uncle Tom's pursuers were not idle. They pressed their horses, for they had not passed two hours on the road before they began to hear of him. The animal he rode was, beyond a doubt, the identical one sold by the citizen to the hostler; and as for the negro himself, almost everybody, it seemed, had noticed him—he rode so awkwardly, and made such untiring efforts to hurry his beast. They did not “put up,” when night came on, but procuring fresh horses, kept to the road.

The night was beautiful. There was no moon, it is true, but the whole firmament appeared to be one vast milky-way—so thick and brilliant were the stars. A gentle breeze crept over the hills, and along the dales, divesting the evening atmosphere of that enervating influence which sometimes succeeds an October sun in old Virginia. The two horsemen were passing through a rich agricultural region; the valleys skirted with natural groves, and the high hills, and loftier mountains, covered with dense forests. The ride was interesting, especially to Mr. Gravity. He was not much of a traveler, having, for the most of his life, confined himself close to the plantation, and its immediate vicinity. His views were not, therefore, as broad and comprehensive, or liberal, as they might

have been, if he had seen more of the world. The valley of the Shenandoah, to his mind, was about the only valley worth mentioning, and in goodness of climate and fertility of soil, stood unrivaled.

But now, in passing along, he was constantly in the midst of wide fields of meadow, corn, wheat, and tobacco land; or ascending and descending low hills, abounding with pastures, full of thick, heavy feed, and buildings, abundant and well constructed, for the use of both man and beast. Such a country he did not expect to see, and therefore viewed it with more interest and greater pleasure. He was almost glad that Tom had run away, so that he might thus enjoy himself in the pursuit.

Just at dawn, they reached the turnpike gate. Upon instituting the usual inquiry, whether a strange negro had passed that way, the gate-tender recapitulated what transpired the day before.

"Ah! the rascal! he gave his name correctly the first time," remarked the citizen.

"No doubt of it," said the overseer.

"I could hardly consent to pass him; but what could I do? He had the document, and I could not gainsay it," said the gate-tender.

"How did the horse appear to endure hard riding?" inquired the citizen.

"All in a foam, and quite lank; he puffed like a pair of bellows. It was this circumstance more than anything else, that excited my suspicion."

"He did not get far last night, d' ye think?"

"The inn at Swamp Creek holds him now, I reckon."

"How far on is that?" asked Mr. Gravity.

"We call it ten miles — rather long."

"We will ride there to breakfast," said the citizen; and putting spurs to their horses they passed quickly under the gate, and started off at a full gallop.

The sun was not two hours high when the pursuers reached the creek. No sooner were they dismounted, than they inquired if the negro was stopping there, or had been seen. The landlord replied in the negative; and upon it being intimated that perhaps he was disposed to deceive, he asseverated, upon his honor, that no such person had passed the inn to his knowledge. They were at fault what to do. The slave would not stop at a private house, unless that of an acquaintance; and he could have none in that region. His horse must have rest, and he would not think of proceeding to the next public house — several miles ahead.

"Mr. Gravity, we must eat, and bait, and consider. I'm afraid we are getting to the end of our rope. We have had a good stretch. We are now coming to close quarters, or I am no judge. I believe that I can almost smell the critter; he is in this vicinity, depend on 't," said the citizen.

"Well, sir, we will halt, and take our reckoning," replied the overseer; and at once ordered the necessary entertainment.

"I will take a walk around this settlement, and see if I can learn anything. Meanwhile, you question the landlord," said the citizen.

He went into a low, wooden building that looked the worse for wear, from the ravages of wind, rain,

and time. It was partially filled with candies, a box or two of dried herring, hard-looking, withered raisins, and there lay scattered upon the shelves a few papers of tobacco, and a dozen or so of pipes. A barrel, from which a tapster occasionally drew whiskey, stood in one of the corners of the room ; and a chest of tea, recently opened, was under the counter. A lad, somewhere in his teens, was in attendance, to wait upon customers.

“My boy, can you give me any information, if I should ask you?” said the citizen.

“I will be arter tellin’ you when you have asked it.”

“That ’s frank. Have you seen anybody since yesterday, whom you did n’t know?”

“That ’s hard question, mister ; to speak at random, I should say not,” answered the lad, with an air of perfect simplicity.

“I heard that a large buck negro stopped or passed through this burg last night—a mighty big fellar, with a splendid bay horse ; did you see him?” said the citizen, as naturally as if he told the truth.

“Oh ! no ; that ’s not so. He fell from his horse before he got here.”

“Fell from his horse ! what do you mean, my boy?”

“Why, they say an unknown black was thrown, as he was riding below here yesterday, and —”

“But where was this?” asked the citizen, before the boy had time to finish what he would say.

“I can not tell you exactly ; ’t was this side of the gate.”

“That ’s the fellar I wish to see ; he is a runaway.

You can't inform me the exact place where he met with the accident?"

"No, mister; it must have been on some hill, for they said the horse stumbled."

"Ah! and fell on to the nigger; I see how it was. Well, let me think—there is a long slope about half way from here; I suspect that was the place. By the way, when did you hear the news?"

"Not half an hour ago. Budd Cramer told me, as soon as he got his grist into the hopper. He lives down the road."

"Can you point this gentleman out to me? I should like to put him some questions. He can tell me the exact place."

"He was off as soon as his grist was *ground*."

"Bad luck! I must get hold of the nigger."

"No trouble to do that; he is under the turf now, I s'pect."

"Dead?"

"Certainly; I thought I told you so. Yes; that is so. He died in the night; and Budd said he was to be buried early, for he was mortifying fast."

"Dead and buried! Well, well; I don't see but that the race is up. Poor fellar! he should have stayed at home; good enough for him—a just punishment!" exclaimed the citizen; and returning to the inn, informed the overseer of this melancholy intelligence.

Mr. Gravity agreed with the citizen, that there could be no doubt of the information being reliable—it came in such an authentic way—but to satisfy

themselves that such was the fact, they inquired at most every house, as they returned; and finally, after much trouble, saw a new-made grave in an adjoining lot, which they took to be Uncle Tom's. They alighted at a house near by, and were informed that a negro was buried there that morning. This was enough; and without troubling themselves to know the condition of the horse, remounted and directed their course homeward. They traveled more leisurely, and reached the city toward dusk of the next day.

Mr. Erskine saw no reason to doubt the accuracy of the overseer's statement and conclusion, and went home to Oakland, regretting the loss of his property, and sorry that the slave had hurried himself so thoughtlessly into eternity. He broke the mournful tidings to Dinah, as gently as the circumstances would admit of. But there were no bounds to her lamentation; she blamed herself for consenting to the escape; and for months this, with all the particulars, constituted the theme of her conversation. The people at the quarters condoled with her; the overseer was attentive to her wants; Mary was more frequently at the cabin; and all pitied the lamentable fate of poor Tom.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BUFFALO — THE BOOT-BLACK.

“ Long sought ! and found in vain
In sunshine have I sought thee, and in shade.”

SAMOR.

It has been sublimely said, “’t is distance lends enchantment to the view.” Hope — the mighty incentive of all human effort — can not exist of itself. That which begets a wish or desire for some good, must also, at the same time, present it in such an attitude as to produce an expectation or belief, no matter how slight, of obtaining it, in order to create hope. And when *this* mainspring of the soul is once touched, its resilience is constant, and sometimes almost seems to be impelled by a supernatural power. Hence, the greater the effort, the more poignant the disappointment, if not attained. That the object, when reached, is ever precisely what, in a distant view, it may have appeared to be, no one will venture to assert ; and the failure of expectation will be proportionate, and the mind surprised and inclined to be downcast. But, if this attractive star of hope shoots suddenly into nonentity, when

approached, and oblivion, like a pall, mantles the vision, then indeed the soul sickens, the journey of life looks dismal, and, if not well grounded in the faith, we look upon heaven as a chimera and hell as a bugbear, and are ready to exclaim, "what shadows we are, what shadows do we pursue!"

We will not aver that this was the condition of mind in which Uncle Tom found himself, some three years after he fell from his horse, on the high road from Winchester to Harper's Ferry. He was left for dead, by his pursuers, and such we supposed to be the fact, until we learned to the contrary. But what his precise condition then was, and whether he ever arrived at that "state of freedom," which he set out to reach, the reader will learn in the sequel.

Suffice it to say, that upwards of three years after the events mentioned in the preceding chapter, in the edge of a hot evening in the month of August, a gentleman rode up to a house of public entertainment, in a retired little village, not far from the river Niagara, known by the name of Saint Davids. This hamlet—never very noisy, and its citizens usually very sedate—was uncommonly so on the evening in question.

No person was visible about the public house; a large dog lay on the stoop, half asleep; but the tramping of the horse aroused him from his lethargy, and after considerable effort he rose up, although not "upon all fours," for he was too lazy to do that. The door was wide open, but no host in attendance, save Jowler, to welcome the guest. The posts designed to support the roof of the stoop seemed to be tired of their position,

and were quietly but unceasingly at work to get away; for their tenons, and the mortices with which they had been in close companionship for years, had rotted out and silently taken their departure; the small doors that were used as barricades to the windows, stood ajar and dangled upon their rusty hinges; the sign, which hung from a joist nailed to one of the posts, was almost illegible, so much battered was it by the weather; and many a clapboard on the exterior of the main building had parted company from its fellow, and those which still remained appeared lonesome and anxious to be on the move.

"Halloo! halloo, here!" vociferated the traveler, retaining his seat in the saddle, for he did not care about having a personal rencounter with the dog—although he wagged his tail as if he was glad to see the stranger.

There was no response, and no stir inside.

"I say—halloo there, I say!" again shouted the traveler; "are you all dead here? halloo, the landlord!"

The air was so still that this summons could be heard all over the village. As no one came out on to the stoop, Jowler considered it his duty to attend to the call so earnestly made, and began to growl and bark.

"Get out of the way, and let a friend pass," said the traveler, "or I'll give you the benefit of my riding whip."

This language did not suit the notions of Jowler, and he at once bristled up, and barked louder and sharper than before.

“Confound your impertinence ! Well, bark then — bark away. Perhaps your throat will be more effective than mine ; I have barked some myself, from first to last, and at times, perhaps, with as little cause as you now have. That ’s right now ; bark loud and strong,” said the traveler ; and settled back into his seat.

It was not long before he heard a rustling inside ; the dog’s noise produced the desired effect. A black man soon stood in the doorway, rubbing his eyes. He was scantily dressed, although he did not appear to have been abed. He had on a pair of pantaloons made out of towcloth, much soiled with dirt ; an old, tattered satin vest—the pocket linings having worn through, and hanging out conspicuously ; a hat made out of very coarse straw, and saturated pretty much all over with perspiration—that is to say, what was left of it as originally made, for the rim was gone, except a small piece directly over the eyes as it was now worn, and the top was entirely gone—and a thick, red flannel shirt, with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows.

“Cuffy, is that you ?” inquired the traveler.

“Yas, mass’r.”

“A good while coming !”

“Dunno.”

“Are you the landlord here ?”

“What will you have ?”

“I did think of tarrying here to-night, and halted for that purpose ; but you are all so dull and slow, I have almost changed my mind. What’s the distance to the next inn ?”

"I s'pose dey call um seven or eight miles."

"Oh! heyday! I am too fatigued to ride that distance; I must hold to my first purpose, and stop with you. Good quarters for the beast, I hope?"

"Turn um into the lot; I reckon he can crop it a little—hard an' dry, though."

"Ah! that will not do; take him to the barn, and give him a good measure of oats."

The black man shook his head.

"What! no oats? Well, then, feed the animal with some corn."

"I hab not seen an oat nor a kernel dis long time; I am eenymost dead for hoeecake myself; can't gib um dat."

"You have no provender! I advise you to take down your sign."

"The road is open to all, sir; you are not compelled to stop," replied the black man, with considerable spunk.

"Polite—that is very polite; if your master is equally so, hospitality under this roof must be anything but agreeable."

"Oh! I am sorry to offend, sir; I merely meant to say that you was not obleeged to stop, if you did see de sign; dat 's all. You can have what the house affords," responded the black, in a meeker voice.

"Very good; I suppose I must make the most of it. Put out the horse, and give him to eat of the best you have," said the traveler; and dismounting, the black man lead the beast to the stable.

The traveler took a survey of the inside of the house;

it was the counterpart of the exterior. The floors looked as though they had not seen water for months, or the scrubbing-broom or mop for years; the decanters and glasses in the bar were specked with dirt; the plaster in the ceiling, and on the walls, was cracked and broken, and what remained looked as if every moment it was about to fall; the wainscot was cut, marked, and hacked in a variety of ways, and probably once had a coat of paint, but now so dim, difficult to see; a broken chair or two, and a rickety old table, with an article called a bunk, for the negro to repose in, about comprised the furniture of the public room. He opened a door which conducted out of this place toward the rear of the building, and discovered a room used as a sitting and dining-room. He walked into it. There was a carpet lying upon most of the floor, but so full of dirt that it grated his shoes, as he gently stepped across the room; a segment of what, in the day of its prime, might have been called a mirror, hung over a table placed between two windows; there was a small book directly under the glass, which he found, upon opening, was the holy bible. This discovery tended to soothe his ruffled temper, notwithstanding everything else which his eyes fell upon, looked dingy and uninviting. He saw no person, nor heard the footstep or voice of any one, until the negro came in from the barn.

“You are not keeping tavern alone, are you?” asked the traveler of the negro.

“They have gone from home now—all but the cook.”

"Thank fortune! I want nothing to eat," thought he to himself.

"Well, you have stabled the animal, have you?"

"Yas, mass'r; all right — cut some grass, and give him plenty."

"You are not troubled with guests very often, I take it."

"Oh! yes; plenty for me to do; up early and late."

"Light work — light work, I expect."

"Light work! give me de ole cabin to this situation. There is no rest here; up at all times o' night."

"Good pay, though. How long you been here?"

"Since spring."

"I should n't think it was very hard. I do n't see why you should have customers, you are so short of the comforts for both man and beast; you was so hard to arouse, I was on the point of proceeding on."

"Excuse dat; I must have been in a snooze; I attended to your call as soon as I heard it. For de Lor's sake! do n't tell the old man, if he gets home afore you go; if you do, I can not tell what will become of me."

"Why, you are an able-bodied man, and can easily earn your livelihood. I do n't see why you should be so sensitive of being discharged; from your appearance, I should not suppose your wages could be any very great inducement for you to desire to remain here."

"Lor' bless you, sir, you do n't know what we poor people endure; you rich folks can't begin to dream of our troubles. I hab neber seen so much misery as during the last three years."

Fudge! Cuffy, you, and such like, can not have so much trouble. What annoys you? nobody but yourself to provide for; no wife, I presume?"

"Oh! God bless you, sir, do n't mention dat!" exclaimed the negro, with a deep, long drawn sigh.

"Ah! some domestic trouble. Parted with some Nelly, eh?" said the traveler; and before the words were scarcely out of his mouth, the negro was upon his knees, both hands upon his breast, his eyes cast upward, and his lips moving, evidently in deep grief. The traveler looked at him a moment, in utter astonishment. But the attitude of the negro, with the time and place, and his personal appearance—all together, made the scene ludicrous, and the stranger was more inclined to mirth than sorrow.

"If the tavern-keeper discharges you, Cuffy, there is one thing you can do," said he.

"Wha' dat?" said the negro, dropping his hands by his side, and rising from the floor.

"You can go on to the stage and play tragedy. I have no doubt but that you was born for the sock and buskin."

"Oh! my heart is sore—berry sore, mass'r."

"All have their troubles, and you look as if you had seen a good many years. I suppose you have had your share of ills."

"Dunno; I have enough. I am disappointed, and there is no peace for me."

"Pshaw! who, pray, has not been disappointed? You could not appreciate the good, if you did not occasionally have a share of the bad. Poverty is

unpleasant, and labor sometimes seems to be still more so. The former may produce sorrow, but the latter never should. Whoever obeys the laws of his country ought to be allowed a serene mind, whatever his lot. You are poor, and are compelled to drudge; but you should harmonize your feelings to it, then you will not get into such flighty moods. I suspect laziness, Cuffy, is your disease. I do n't know as you are to be blamed for it, though, for I never knew a nigger that would n't be so."

"That's not my case, sir. No matter what I do, I can not help alwars thinkin' of whar' I come from; an' first I know, I stop my work."

It occurred to the traveler, that perhaps he had actually stumbled upon a fugitive slave; and as he took a deep interest in that class of persons, and their humble condition had his warmest sympathy, he might now have a good opportunity to learn something to his own advantage. Instead, therefore, of asking for a candle to light the way to bed, he continued the conversation:

"Cuffy, you have lived here in Canada from your youth up, have you not?"

"O no, sir; it is now guine on three years since I first set my foot in dis land of freedom."

"Ah! are you what is called a fugitive?"

"Yas, I run away; and almost dead, I reached here."

"And did you not find it as you expected?"

"Oh! mass'r, no; nothin'—nothin' as I expected to seed um."

"Have you worked, been economical, laid up your wages?" inquired the traveler; for, as they were alone, and no person would see his inquisitiveness, or hear the answers, he might as well ask all the questions that occurred to his mind.

"Yas; dis nigger has worked whenever he could find an opportunity; but it has taken all I could earn to pay my expenses. My clothes are not now as good as I had when I left the plantation."

"Why, pray, what did you have? I suppose you merely had enough to cover you," remarked the traveler.

"A good white shirt, and suit, of coat, pantaloons, and vest; an' the saddle-bags full—full of everything useful. Now, you sees wid your own eyes all I possess, excepting one red shirt, the mate to this."

"That 's queer! I thought the slaves were a very poor class—ragged, and poorly fed."

"Poorly fed! I alwars had my cabin full of good things; and my wife—oh! bless her good soul—alwars thar to smile, talk, an' sing. Oh! what a fool was I to come away. She advised me not to come—she said, stay and be content. But I had heard so much of this land, my feelin's made me come. I am sorry that I ever saw that evil day."

"How did you get here?"

"Too long story, mass'r."

"You did not foot it the whole distance, did you?"

"Oh! I rode some—come all sorts of ways; was very near being snapped up—wished I had been—should n't laid in dat ole bunk, and be eat up by fleas

and bugs. I can't bear to think on't. Too bad—it's too bad."

"You chanced to come directly here, then?" asked the traveler, surprised at the negro's talk.

"O Lor'de massy, no! I went across on the islands of that big river away below here, and stopped at Kingston."

"That's a long distance from this place," said the traveler; and at the same time shaking his head, in doubt whether the negro was not talking merely to entertain him.

"I reckon I knows dat; I tried the road to my satisfaction," said the negro, not caring whether the stranger believed his story or not.

"How on earth did you contrive to reach this village?"

"I worked my way along up, begging what I could, till I got to Toronto; dar' I stopped, and arter walkin' 'bout the streets for days, trying to find mass'r Bates—blast him!—I give it up, and found some work. It did n't agree wid my disposition, and so I left, to see what I could do in the country. I hired out to the Judge, and help'd keep tavern here eber since."

"What do they call your name? As you are safe here from recapture, there is no harm in divulging that."

"Tom is my name, from Ole Virginny."

"Well, with a more eligible situation, probably you could earn more money with half the labor."

"I am disgusted with work in these northern latitudes; but I must do it even to live."

"Now, my good fellow, let me tell you, if you were attending to the same line of business, in some other place, you could do better. This is a poor place — a poor tavern—a poor landlord, I presume; and I should suppose that all concerned would be poor. You must try some other place."

"Whar', mass'r?"

"In the States."

"Oh! I could n't do that—liable to be taken back into slavery, if I stop dare."

"But, you just said that you wished yourself back to the plantation; so, if you should happen to be found out by your owner, you would be better satisfied than to stay here. Besides, you might stop in some of the frontier towns, and if you became alarmed for your freedom, you might quietly step over to Canada until the danger was over."

"Thank 'e; I believe I 'll try it. Whar' would you advise me to go?"

"Buffalo is the tallest place along the line, in my opinion; plenty of work there. Try it; you can't be worse off. Good society, plenty of blacks; one or two churches in which they worship."

"Do you live in that town?"

"In no other; and I would not live in any other, if I had my own will."

"Please, mass'r, tell me your name."

"Certainly; Allgood is my name. If you come there, find me out, by all means."

"I believe I will try your advice; an' I shall tell the Judge my intention, as soon as he gits home."

"Your engagement is not for any specified time, is it?"

"I reckon not."

"You did n't agree to work any longer than you pleased, I take it."

"I reckon not; I think nothin' said 'bout dat."

"If I could see him, I would urge him to let you off, in any event. By the way, when is he expected?"

"He left day before yesterday, and said he should be home in two or three days. It's uncertain, I reckon."

"Where has he gone—far away?" inquired the traveler, who began to take a deep interest in the welfare of the negro.

"To Buffalo; there is a convention being held in that town for the benefit of the colored man. Mr. Brown is one of the leading men, and must be thar'."

"Ah! I understand; you are with your friends now."

"Yas, sir."

"Well, after all, I still think you would improve your condition, if you adopt my advice."

"I know'd it, mass'r."

"You can show me up to my lodging chamber. Perhaps I may see him in the morning."

The negro went up a narrow flight of stairs, and told the traveler to follow.

"I have a hot night before me," said the stranger, as he entered the apartment; "hoist that window, Cuffy, or Tom, I would say; let me have the benefit of all the openings, for God's sake! It feels like an oven here."

"Keep your temper, mass'r; no fire here, and the night air will git in afore daybreak, I'll warrant ye," said the negro, with imperturbable calmness.

"Tom, clean off the horse early, for I must ride to the next inn for my breakfast; I can not think of eating here. In fact, I presume you have nothing but dirt to feed upon."

"Yas, mass'r," replied the negro; and went down into the bar-room.

The advice to change quarters was uppermost in Tom's mind, and he vowed to be off the first opportunity. His condition, he thought, could not be changed for the worse. He told Jowler to keep watch on the stoop, locked the door, and turned into his bunk.

The traveler was restless and uneasy. If he got into a doze, the inclination was more to dreaming than to sleep; and slavery, and how its victims, if perchance they escaped, in nine cases out of ten, only got out of one fire to be presently in another, were the principal features of his thoughts. He rolled, tumbled, and tossed, and wished the tavern-keeper all sorts of destiny, for attending to other people's business and not his own.

"His wife, of course, has gone with him to the convention, and why should n't the bed be filled with vermin, and the sheets unfit even for Tom to lay in? I ought to have known better than to put up at such a place. But I have met Mr. Brown frequently, and really thought the accommodations, although plain, would be comfortable at least. It is always so; I never knew it to fail. Let a woman make up her

mind to appear in public, and she is never at home; eternally looks out, and never looks in. Confound that flea! It's too dark to stick a pin in it. There comes that long-bill musketo! Well, Mrs. Brown is not responsible for that nuisance. I'll give her a quit-claim of that pest. How infernal hot! I wonder if Brown thinks of anything else but niggers?"

These and similar thoughts disturbed the traveler's mind until break of day. He lost no time, as soon as there was light enough to see his clothes; he hurried off from the inn, glad to be relieved of the sight of it. As he inhaled the morning air, he felt refreshed, his mind reanimated, and his thoughts more tranquil. He wondered if he did, in fact, stay at the inn in Saint Davids. It could hardly be possible that he experienced all those torments. Nothing but a dream. The back of his hand itched—pained him. He looked at it, and there were the red spots and rising pimples. The night—room—bed—it was all reality; he could not be mistaken. He thought the time was distant, before he should be caught in such lodgings again.

Tom was dragged out of his bunk earlier than usual. As the traveler rode away from the stoop, he crawled back to his quarters to finish his rest. The outside door which opened into the bar-room, he again bolted, so that no interloper should disturb his repose.

The warm, close atmosphere was fetid. This Tom did not notice until he lay down. He waited upon the traveler long enough to fill his lungs with fresh air. The pure now came in contact with the impure. The stomach nauseated. This sensation was past endurance;

He jumped out of the bunk, hoisted the window, and opened the door. The currents of new air circulated swiftly over the room, driving the old to the ceiling. His feelings were more agreeable, and now he might have a good snooze, he thought. He threw himself once more into the bunk. The old, tattered coverlet—the stripped pillow, yellow most all over with stains—something out of sorts with them; smelt differently. He had not noticed this before. A mere whim—it should n't disturb him. “He was guine to take a nap anyhow.” He turned over toward the window, so that his nostrils and mouth might catch all the fresh air. It made no difference. The musty, unpleasant odor of the coverlet and pillow neutralized and overpowered the fragrance of the woods, fields, and gardens. He nestled, got up, and went to the door; he was wide awake. He was vexed, and had lost all disposition to sleep.

“Confound this hole! I can't stand it; Mr. Brown must let me go. I have had enough of freedom; I will take the advice of mass'r Allgood, and try the States. If massa comes arter me, I can hide—plenty of places,” muttered Tom to himself. He slammed the doors, and banged about the premises. The cook awoke before the usual hour, but could not endure the racket, and so she got up. Sour and cross, she did not half fry the slice or two of pork which she had thrown into the spider—brine and all; the water in the pot did not boil long enough to make much impression upon the young, tender potatoes; the table cloth was stiff with grease and butter; and the onions were served up—tops, roots, and dirt.

"Kitty, if my teeth war n't strong an' sharp, I'd gib um up. The taters are tough, and this pork mighty gritty — has n't seen water, I reckon, since last fall," remarked Tom, endeavoring to satisfy hunger from the eatables which the cook placed upon the table.

"There, do n't be over nice. I guess if you was so hungry you could n't lay abed reasonably, you won't starve on that," replied Kitty, throwing back her head and helping herself as best she might.

"Pout away; I shan't trouble you much longer. I'm guine to quit Saint Davids. I can't—I won't stand dis kind of living eenymore," remarked the negro, with indifference.

"*You* are going to leave Mr. Brown! Well, perhaps you will; I shall believe it when I see you bid good-bye."

"Such am the fact. Mr. Allgood assured me I could do better elsewhere."

"Mr. Allgood! whose acquaintance have you made now?"

"The traveler what put up here last night."

"Nonsense! Good to nobody but himself, I guess. You niggers make wonderful big plans, but generally take it all out in that."

"Ha! ha! ha! That's downright slander. Wall, rail away. I'm proud of de color'd race. We know our rights, and mean to have them. Mr. Brown says we have been downtrodden long enough. Them's my sentiments, most distinctly. The white people should n't be so envious."

"I guess you get your rights fast enough; and if all I

hear be true, you sometimes get more. I do n't know why you should n't work as well as our kind of folks."

"Work, Kitty; does n't dis nigger work? I am constantly at labor, day in and day out. You know'd that; now, jist for once, admit the truth."

"You work, Tom? Why, you are so lazy you can't half the time stand up straight; and you don't do nothin' when you seem to try. No wonder Mr. Erskine don't take the trouble to follow you; and if you are a fair sample, I should suppose that he would be glad to have the rest run away; I am sure I should."

"I alwars know'd you was envious, Kitty. Never mind; you poor white folks have all our sympathies. No real full-blooded nigger will overlook you, nor tread upon you; my kind will alwars treat you right, depend on 't. Now don't take on so, ebery time you hear the subject discussed. Your turn will come some day or other."

"Pshaw! I guess I can take care of myself. Where are you going, Tom?"

"To Buffalo."

"Buffalo?"

"Yas, to de big city of Buffalo. I am guine to try my fortune there; the color'd people do well in that town."

"It may be so; but if *you* do n't starve, I shall be mistaken."

"You knows nothing about it; color'd people have houses and lands of their own, and plenty of money."

"They work, though, and lay up what they git;

you are too indolent to do the one, and it is n't in you to do the other."

"There is no use of my talkin', you are so envious; come up there some time, and I will show you; I will treat you well. Oh! I shan't be ashamed of you, if you do now turn up your nose at me; be sure and come, Kitty. It will only cost a trifle, at the most; if you git out of change, I will help you."

"Do n't trouble yourself, Mr. Tom; I'm thinking you aint gone from Saint Davids, yet," replied the cook, and slamming her chair back against the wall, broke off the conversation.

The negro finished his meal, and went on to the stoop and amused himself with playing with the dog. He had nothing in particular to do but to wait upon customers at the bar, and not much of that. The village was small in size and population; besides, there was another public house in the place, which divided the custom for bitters and grog. And as for travelers, they were more apt to pass by without stopping; and if they halted, it was merely to give their horses a moment or two to breathe and sip a little water. As a general rule, Tom could lie upon the bench from hour to hour, without being disturbed; and he did not omit, especially on this day, to avail himself of the opportunity.

The weather was hot and sultry; a weather-wise barrister said the thermometer stood at ninety-six degrees in the shade. However that might be, the sun was scorching hot, out of the shade. Mr. and Mrs. Brown stopped, the night before, at the house of a

friend, near the river, a short distance below the village of Chippewa. The hospitality was so agreeable, they did not take a very early start; it was after ten o'clock before they resumed their journey homeward. They rode in a vehicle, called a buggy, with no covering to screen themselves from the rays of the sun. Mrs. Brown had not neglected to take the umbrella, but in the confusion incident to the adjournment of a large convention, with many particular friends to say a parting word to, this important traveling companion was entirely overlooked and forgotten. It was not missed the evening previous, and did not come to her recollection, until they rode out of the yard in the morning.

"There, would you believe it, we have lost that ten-shilling umbrella! Stir your feet around in the straw. Don't feel it! gone—lost! It is so strange, Mr. Brown, that you never have your thoughts about you. If I had had nothing to do but to get up the team, when we were starting, we should n't have been in this fix!"

"I did n't think about the umbrella, Lizzy."

"That's what I say; your mind was on something else. If you had had your thoughts about you, we should now have been more comfortable. That shows the necessity, Mr. Brown, of always attending to one's business."

"Why, really, Mrs. Brown, I think you are making me accountable for too much. I don't think it was my duty to look after the umbrella: in the first place, I had it not in charge; and in the second place, I don't care for it."

"Don't say that, husband; it is merely a pretence to get rid of the blame. You are no more fond of the fire than myself. Oh! how hot! Ah! I can't endure this; you must stop and see if you can borrow."

"We will stop and buy one, at the next store."

"Oh, no we won't! we can't afford it. We are engaged in a good cause, and some of the good people along the road here must accommodate us. There, rein up to the bars, and try them in that house yonder. It looks kind o' nice about the yard; I guess they can afford to keep one."

"Shall I tell them we will send it back, Mrs. Brown?"

"Certainly; the first opportunity. You can tell them we shall have plenty of chances."

Mr. Brown thought he might as well succumb first as last; and he had no objection to having the benefit of the shade himself. He knocked at the door of a small farm-house, which stood back from the road several rods, with a patch of land in front, used as a garden—was bidden to walk in, and complied with the order. Before he had time to tell what he wanted, the matron of the house requested him to be seated. He attempted to excuse himself, from haste; but he had no opportunity, as the matron again interrupted him, by shoving a chair across the room, and at the same time saying, "Take a seat, sir." There did not seem to be any other alternative, and concluding that he could do his errand as well sitting as standing, he accepted the invitation, or, more literally, obeyed the mandate.

"I have lost my umbrella, mem, up at the convention; and it is so very scorching in the sun, I have called in to see if you had one that Mrs. Brown can take."

"What convention have you been attending, sir, if I may take the liberty to ask?" said the matron, unwilling to let any occasion slip to acquire information, especially if it cost nothing.

"For the benefit of our colored brethren, at the South," replied Mr. Brown, in a very solemn tone of voice.

"Ah, yes, yes; I am glad you have called in. We meant to have gone up ourselves, but we felt as though we could hardly lose the time, now, right in the midst of haying and harvesting, so. Mr. Sharp is always particular about the crops. We 'tended the other convention, though," complaisantly remarked Mrs. Sharp, thinking that she should now learn all that transpired.

"Yes, mem," was the brief reply of Mr. Brown, who did not fancy the idea of spending the forenoon there, to accommodate Mrs. Sharp with the news.

"Any great doings up there?" she inquired, as he did not appear to take the hint.

"Oh, nothing, mem, of special interest."

"Large attendance?"

"Respectable, quite respectable, mem."

"The big guns were all there, I s'pose."

"Pretty much, mem."

"Well, any new steps proposed?"

"Nothing to speak of; the old story, mem."

"My heart yearns for the poor creatures, every time

I take up my paper. When shall we see the end of it?" said Mrs. Sharp, despairing as much of receiving information as of knowing the final destiny of the slave.

"Mr. Brown, are you intending to spend the day here?" inquired his wife, taking the liberty to open the door without knocking, and out of all patience with her husband's dilatoriness. "You must think that it is very pleasant for me to stay out there in the sun, while you are cooling yourself in the house."

Mr. Brown was thunderstruck, and attempted to apologize for the rudeness.

"There's no use of saying anything. I see how it is: forgot all about me, and paying your addresses to the lady of the house."

"Nonsense, Mrs. Brown. I'm glad to know your name; come in, and join us. I am trying to learn something from your husband concerning the convention; but he is so bashful I have not as yet succeeded. Come in."

Mrs. Brown was glad to accept of the proffered hospitality, and readily seated herself.

"Come, take off your bonnet and things, and take some dinner with us. Mr. Sharp will be up from the wheat field pretty soon. We do n't have much — live plain; but we can give you enough to stay your appetite until you get home," said Mrs. Sharp, standing before Mrs. Brown, to receive her bonnet.

"Mr. Brown, I guess we will stay to dinner, as we shall be late home. You can go out and take care of the mare; hitch her tight, so that she will not start off.

By the way, Mrs. Sharp, have you any little green grass we can give her? it is too bad to make her stand out there with nothing to eat."

"Certainly. The boys are all at work. Mr. Brown, please make yourself at home. You can get a lock in the shed," said Mrs. Sharp, happy to have the company of Mrs. Brown, as she could tell her *all* about the convention.

The latter named lady threw off her things, and leaned back in the rocking-chair, ready for as lengthy a chat as Mrs. Sharp might desire.

"So, you have been up to the tent, have you?"

"Yes; we thought it was our duty to attend. Mr. Brown did not hardly know how he could leave home; but where there is a will there is always a way, you know, Mrs. Sharp."

"I never knew it to fail, Mrs. Brown. You was well paid, I have no doubt, for your trouble."

"Oh! by all means. There was more interest felt, I think, than usual."

"Any new cases reported?"

"Yes; a most horrible one. It fairly made my blood curdle to hear it."

"Oh! pray, tell me the circumstances."

"Whipped to death!"

"Whipped to death!" screamed Mrs. Sharp.

"'T is even so. Really whipped to death!"

"Well now, one would hardly think that such an act would be tolerated in any civilized land in this nineteenth century. Was it done for a punishment?"

"Why, yes; but not from the ordinary cause, Mrs. Sharp."

"Ugliness and laziness combined, probably."

"Oh! bless you, no — no — no — no! When I think of it, I am almost tempted to go South, and fight for the poor slave."

"What was it? Do tell me, Mrs. Brown," said Mrs. Sharp, her feelings wrought up to the extreme pitch of excitement.

"For being a professor of religion, and desiring to attend the church of God!"

"For being a Christian! Oh! awful! how brutal! worse than the cannibal!" exclaimed Mrs. Sharp, twisting her visage into a variety of contortions.

"Tis even so; and in a land calling itself Christian!" added Mrs. Brown.

"Well, it is so awful, we could not credit the fact, if we did not *know* it to be so; could we?"

"I do n't know what will come next; I am prepared now for anything. I was remarking to Mr. Brown, as we came along, that I should expect to hear next of slaves being whipped to death for even having a desire to eat or drink. How utterly depraved human nature must be in that dark region!"

Mrs. Sharp desired to be informed of the details, and Mrs. Brown rehearsed the circumstances, as she heard them at the convention.

In the meantime, Mr. Brown sought out Mr. Sharp in the wheat field, and told *him* what transpired at the convention. Mr. Sharp was as much astonished as his wife, at the intelligence.

"Brown, it does seem to me that it can not be true," said he, as they were walking toward the house.

"No doubt of it; comes in an authentic shape. Must be reliable."

"Downright murder — worse than that — it is blasphemous! That planter never can see heaven. He ought not to be allowed to repent, even if he would. Hell is too lenient for the infamous wretch!"

"The greater the necessity for unflinching fortitude on our part. This case, probably, is only one out of a thousand. I expect that we do not hear the half that might be told."

"Well, what was proposed?"

"To circulate the documents more freely in all the Southern country; send our friends there, and by all possible means, awaken the blacks to a sense of their danger. We have agreed to contribute more liberally. I suppose you will be ready for any reasonable levy that may be made upon your purse?" inquired Mr. Brown.

"Oh! I generally bear my share of the burden. I think, however, that more is effected by persuasion than violence. We should preach more to the masters, and less to the slaves. A correct moral sentiment among the owners is the most desirable. Get this class of persons right, and there is more hope of the ultimate redemption of our fellow-creatures from the thralldom of bondage."

"That will not be accomplished in our day, Mr. Sharp. So long as money can be made in the traffic of human flesh, the cursed evil will continue. No,

no. This is not the time for lukewarmness on the part of professed friends. We must make the slaveholder feel the force of Northern opinion, by dispossessing them of what is technically termed property, (what a God forsaken word!) and furnishing a safe retreat and an impregnable asylum for the slave, when he happens to make good his escape to this land of freedom."

"Have you ever looked into this Liberia question, Mr. Brown? It has been running in my mind considerably, for some time past; I don't exactly know what to think about it."

"Fudge! Do you suppose that fellow who whipped his slave to death, would have consented to part with him for any sum of money? Not he. And as for emancipation, the bloodthirsty monster would laugh at the proposition," said Mr. Brown, becoming excited, and vexed that his friend should entertain such ideas.

"The case reported is extraordinary."

"But none the less true for that, Mr. Sharp."

"Certainly not. But such instances, I suspect, must be rare."

"The half does not reach our ears, sir. And if this is the first instance of the kind, how do we know—what assurance have we—that the same scene will not be enacted again to-morrow? When nature is so depraved, there is no safeguard against a repetition, unless you remove all opportunity for the commission of the crime."

"I don't know about believing it. I should suppose that he would dislike to part with his property so

cheaply. I see no inducement; and the doctrine, Mr. Brown, you know, is that the slaveholder holds his property for gain. I suspect the slave must have been ugly, or tricky in work—something of the kind.”

“Ah! Mr. Sharp, I am afraid you are letting go the faith. I will see what your wife says,” remarked Mr. Brown, as they entered the house.

“Would you believe it, Mr. Sharp, they have killed another negro down South!” said Mrs. Sharp.

“Oh! I have told him the story, but he does not believe it,” said Mr. Brown.

“Does not believe it!” exclaimed Mrs. Sharp.

“I was remarking to Mr. Brown, that I could see no inducement; that was all,” said her husband.

“Pshaw! there is no doubt of its authenticity, Mr. Sharp. Natural—just what we expect to hear. He believes it as much as we do, Mr. Brown.”

“I should n’t think Mr. Sharp would be an unbeliever; he must be too sensible for that, or you would not live with him, Mrs. Sharp,” said Mrs. Brown.

“Of course not.”

The dinner was ready, and Mr. and Mrs. Sharp, and Mr. and Mrs. Brown sat down to the table to partake of it. The evils of slavery, and the sufferings of its victims, was the theme of conversation. They agreed perfectly in sentiment. The same unanimity existed as to the remedy to eradicate the evil, unless the fact that Mr. Sharp occasionally suggested Liberia as the elixir, might be deemed a difference.

“To tell you the truth, Mr. Brown, my husband lately has got it into his head that emancipation is the

thing ; but I tell him it would be so gradual, the poor slave never would get his rights. They increase too fast ever to be all freed," said Mrs. Sharp, lest her visitors should go away with a wrong impression of her views.

"I hope you will cure him of that," said Mrs. Brown.

These visitors succeeded not only in borrowing an umbrella, but in obtaining the loan of a dinner, and proceeded homeward very comfortably.

"Mr. Brown, you see I am always right. How nice now, is the ride; the umbrella makes a good shade—rather small. I wonder they did n't get a bigger one; it would n't have cost but a little more."

"Beggars should n't be choosers, Lizzy. I did not like Mr. Sharp's talk: somebody is sowing tares in this neighborhood."

"Never mind, Mrs. Sharp will keep her husband all right, I'll warrant you."

"Doubtful; he spoke very decidedly."

"Poor woman! she has her hands full to manage him, I suppose. When *will* men learn to be domestic! It was his fault, no doubt, that they did not go to the convention. Stingy man! afraid to spend a cent in the cause. Heigh ho! start up the mare—let her jog along a little faster, Mr. Brown; I am tired of this dust: whew! how thick it comes!"

Mrs. Brown's tongue never rested when she was awake; and what was a remarkable trait, she was unhappy unless her husband was present. Her eyes would snap like lightning-bugs, if contradicted in the

least; and as Mr. Brown hardly ever ventured to express a dissent, she preferred to talk to him. She always took him along, if she went out of the village. Not that she wished him to say anything, unless her conversation lagged, and then only to fill up, whilst she took time to adjust the shawl, or fix her bonnet, or the like. His disposition was kind and obliging, and they lived happily — at any rate, Mrs. Brown did.

“What a rich prospect!” said she, as they emerged from the woods, and were descending the high hill above Saint Davids. “You must make up for lost time; there is a second crop down in the meadow, and you had better take it down right away, Mr. Brown,” she added, as they came abreast of a respectable sized lot, covered with thick, short grass.

“Yes, Lizzy; I will put Tom into it to-morrow.”

“It feels mighty lonesome here, after seeing so much company for two or three days,” remarked Mrs. Brown, as they rode into the village.

“Yes, Lizzy, but I am glad to get home,” replied her husband, as they rode up to the inn.

The negro lay on the bench, fast asleep; Jowler had gone around the other side of the house, to get into the shade. Some swine were wallowing in a large mud-puddle not far distant from the door step; and what might have been called, in the day of its prime, a broom, but now having more the resemblance of a scrub, was balancing upon the edge of the stoop, as if in doubt whether the street or floor contained the most dirt.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown alighted. The dog, hearing the

noise of the carriage wheels as they rolled upon the flat stone in front of the door, left his lair and walked around the corner to observe who had arrived, and finding his master and mistress, expressed himself gratified to welcome them home.

"Tom! you lazy, good-for-nothing lout, why aint you stirring?" inquired Mrs. Brown, joggling the negro out of his sleep.

In consequence of his inability to sleep the usual time the night before, Tom was now enjoying the luxury of a very sound doze. Coming out of it so suddenly, produced some bewilderment, and the first he knew, he found himself prostrate upon the floor. As soon as his eyes opened and fell upon the masculine form of Mrs. Brown, he instantly came to his senses, and started to his feet.

"It is you, missus! I's glad to see you are come; I have been waitin' for you all day," said the negro, stretching his brawny arms above his head.

"Well, I s'pose you have not had much to do, so put out the mare, and go into the garden and dig a hill of potatoes; we have n't had anything fit to eat since we left home. Be spry, now," said Mrs. Brown to her cherished pet.

"Yas, missus," replied the negro, and did as directed, fully impressed, however, with the belief that there was no hurry, so leisurely did he execute the command.

Mrs. Brown scolded the cook, and became quite impatient, Tom was so long coming with the potatoes.

"I never did see the like on 't; these niggers are the

slowest mortals ! Who could have thought it ? why, it is an hour, I do believe, since I told that fellar what to do. No wonder they never have anything. Kitty, go out, and, for land's sake, see what has become of him ! I should n't wonder if he had gone to sleep agin," said Mrs. Brown, rocking in the big arm chair, and perusing the last paper.

Tom presently came in.

"Missus, I am guine to leave you," he remarked, as he sat down the basket.

"What is it you say, Tom ?" inquired Mrs. Brown, with a look of surprise.

"I say, dis person am guine from Saint Davids."

"You do n't mean for good, d'ye ?"

"Foreber. I am satisfied that this is not the place for me ; I can do better in another place."

"You do n't say you are in earnest ?"

"Dat am de fact."

"Where do you think of going, pray ?"

"To the big city of Buffalo."

"To Buffalo ?"

"Yas, missus."

"Foolish fellar ! you won't stay there long, or I miss my reckoning. Why, your old master will have you right away, if you cross the line ; they have their spies out all around," said Mrs. Brown, throwing down the paper, and determined to dissuade him from his purpose.

"Mr. Allgood talk'd differently," said the negro, in a lower voice

"Mr.—who ?"

"Mr Allgood, missus."

"Allgood? I know no such person."

"He lives in dat city, and he told me by all means to go. He said he would befriend me."

'You may rely upon it, he means you no good; it is a trap to catch you. My advice is, to remain where you are; you are doing well now—far better than a majority of your race; and only think of again being reduced to servitude, after you have once tasted the sweets of freedom! No, no; do n't, I beg of you, make such a dunce of yourself."

"I can't so look at the subject, missus; an' I can easily run out of the way, if I seed the slave-catcher," said the negro, taking courage, as Mrs. Brown did not absolutely forbid him to leave.

"Brown, would you believe it, our Tom actually thinks of quitting Saint Davids, for Buffalo? I tell him, he goes into slavery in a jiff, if he stops at that place," said she, to her husband, who happened into the kitchen.

"Yes, and if he is caught now, he will find the chain and lash more galling than he ever did," remarked Mr. Brown, chiming in with his wife.

"Ah! you can't go, Tom. I believe he agreed to work for us till fall, did he not?"

"There was no time fixed," replied Mr. Brown.

"The truth; that is so, missus," quickly added the negro, and chuckling that he was not obliged to remain, walked into the bar-room, for the purpose of packing his duds.

"I really don't know what *will* become of us,

you make such foolish bargains," said she to her husband.

"The time escaped my attention, Lizzy ; I have so much to think of, I can't have my thoughts upon every thing, all the while."

"Jist when we want him the most, he must up and leave. He has not, actually, earned the salt in his porridge. Shiftless, dirty creature ! always standing about, with no will to do anything useful, all winter, spring, and summer ; and now, when he would come handy, he must go to Buffalo ! Is there any wages due him ?"

"A few shillings."

"Don't you pay him a penny ; I will not consent to it, that's flat. Now, Brown, have your thoughts about you."

"Why, Lizzy, you would not cheat the poor man out of a few shillings, would you ? he will starve."

"Let him beg, then ; he knows how to do that work to perfection : and besides, it will give him employment, and keep him out of mischief. No, no ; not a cent, Mr. Brown ; we have done enough for him already," said Mrs. Brown, emphatically.

The tavern-keeper scratched his head, and followed Tom into the bar-room. The negro overheard the conversation in the kitchen after he came out.

"Well, you are resolved to leave us ?" remarked Mr. Brown, discovering Tom tying up his shirt with a tow string.

"Yas ; I'm off to Buffalo, for worse or good."

"What's your notion of starting to-day, and so near sunset ?"

"Not so hot, sir, in the night — no sun."

"What do you expect to do? I am afraid you will starve."

"Rub the gemmen's boots and shoes. First-rate business, and good pay; all in hand — no trust."

"Yes, yes; good idea. Tom, do we owe you anything?" asked the tavern-keeper, with some hesitation, for he hardly knew what to do about paying, if he did, Mrs. Brown was so positive in her direction.

"Not a cent; we are even. I have reckoned it up. I have taken thirty shillings since you have been gone, from the customers; that makes us squar'."

Mr. Brown did not think the balance was quite so much. But as he would not be compelled to violate his wife's injunction, he concluded not to say anything about it.

"Very well; call it so, and make good use of your money," he replied; and invited the negro to stay and get his supper.

"That's been attended to, sir. I am full as a tick; I had jist eaten my dinner when you drove up," said Tom, who did not care to stay any longer, for fear that Mrs. Brown might in the meantime interpose some obstacle to his going.

"If you ever come this way, Tom, don't give us the slip; we shall be glad to see you."

"Neber fear dat," he answered, and opening the kitchen door, made his obeisance to Mrs. Brown; and without stopping to receive her parting blessing, took to the street, and walked off, very nimbly for him, bound for Buffalo, to try his fortune as a boot-black.

CHAPTER XXV.

HARD TIMES.

"Still, if I ponder Fate's unaltered plan,
Nor, fleeing back the child, forget that I am man."

GEORGE DYER.

Tom arrived in Buffalo late in the afternoon of the next day after he bid farewell to the inn at Saint Davids. An utter stranger, he knew not whither to direct his footsteps. He came up from the ferry at Black Rock, and entered the metropolis on a street known by the name of Niagara. As he entered another avenue—for it was more like that than a common street—he suddenly found himself amid the hum of business, and constantly jostled with people passing to and fro. He observed many of his own color; and the appearance of several indicated that this world did not go hard with them. He spoke to one or two, but they were in too great haste to stop and talk; and he followed the wide sidewalk, caring but little where it conducted him. He soon observed a long pole—which he subsequently learned was called "the liberty

pole"—erected high in the air, with a flag suspended from it at half-mast. This attracted his attention, and he halted to see it undulate in the breeze. He had stood but a moment or two, when a person rudely slapped him upon the shoulder, and asked him what he was gazing at.

"Yon banner, I presume; how solemnly it waves," replied a young gentleman, in his behalf, who admired the black because he evinced sense enough to pause and survey it in silence. The challenger did not appreciate the remark, but viewed the flag as so much cloth swinging in the wind, gave a loud, sneering sort of chuckle, and passed across the street.

As the young gentleman had volunteered to take the answer out of his mouth, Tom felt at liberty to inquire why the banner was thus displayed:

"Capt. Isham, of the schooner Iroquois, fell overboard into the creek last night, and was drowned. I knew the poor fellow well."

"Mass'r, I neber see the stars and stripes without thinking of freedom; dat's what stopped me. Do you know Mr. Allgood?"

"Allgood — Allgood; it seems to me I do. I think he is—it is my impression—let me see—ah! he was formerly on the—I guess he was—yes, I know him," replied the young gentleman.

"Will you tell me whar' I can find him?" inquired Tom, rejoiced to think that he should find his friend.

"Upon my life, I can not inform you. But, look into the directory; you will find his name there; the name of every resident in the city is there—it is very

full," replied the young gentleman, and he passed across the street also.

Tom did not acquire much information, for he had never heard of a directory, and he was puzzled to understand what the man meant. He observed a tavern, a short distance down the street, to his right, and as it was getting late, he thought he would go and call for entertainment.

He entered the public house, and learned that it was called the City Hotel. He considered himself fortunate, for it was near this place that Mr. Allgood said he lived. Tom asked for supper and lodgings, and was civilly informed that he could be accommodated.

In the morning, he was stirring before many of the other lodgers, for he had heard that the man who got up early picked up the worm. He strolled over a bridge which spanned the Erie canal, and elbowed his way toward the creek. He had not gone far, when he fell in company with a colored man, whose appearance indicated that he was in no danger of starvation, and whose countenance betokened a kind, obliging disposition.

"Can you tell whar' Mr. Allgood lives?" inquired Tom.

"I have not the honor to know the man," replied the person addressed; "what business does he follow?"

"Dunno, sir; he advised dis nigger to cum to Buffalo an' make his fortune."

"Ah! well, this is the place, no doubt. Plenty to do, and good pay. Where do you hail from?"

"Down South. I have been to Saint Davids.

Tired of freedom thar', I thought I would try it in dis town."

"Ah, ha! You have delivered yourself from the master! Good! What can you do?"

"I have selected the profession. Mr. Allgood says I can make property at that," replied Tom, leaning against an awning post.

"What profession did you remark?"

"Boot-black. I can beat um all in dat line."

"Lucrative business, I expect. You have not selected your depot yet, I take it?"

"Dat 's de reason 'kase I war lookin' for my friend, Mr. Allgood."

"Never mind him; I can accommodate you, myself. Come, follow me, and I will show you the spot. It 's right in the heart of trade, and terms liberal."

"Thank 'e. Wha' name do you go by?"

"I go by none. My name is Easy—Easy, sir; known all over the city. Ask for Easy, the clothes renovator, and you will never fail to find me."

"Thank 'e. I bless my stars for finding you now," replied Tom; and accepting Mr. Easy's polite offer, went back over the bridge. Turning to the left, they went but a few steps, before his friend left the sidewalk, and descended a steep hill.

"Whar' you guine, Mr. Easy?" asked Tom, not fancying the job of climbing back, for the distance to the bottom was so great, it seemed almost out of the world.

"To the depot. Come along; nice place, when you get down—shady, and safe from the lake winds," said Mr. Easy, in a voice full of encouragement.

"I do n't like the looks of dis valley. But Mr. Easy knows best; I'll slide along arter him," said Tom, in an under-tone.

An edifice, eight by ten, covered with boards—one lapped upon the other, and laying loosely; the sides made of various-sized materials, with an abundance of apertures for the air to pass into the building, and some of the beams and joists so old that the frame could scarcely hold together, contrived to stand at the foot of the hill; and was the place to which Mr. Easy conducted Tom, to set up business.

"There, sir, this is the spot. Handy to get around in; no up-stairs traveling, and not disturbed by the rattling carts and wagons. Besides, you have no interlopers looking in to chat; we are rid of such bores. If a gentleman calls, you may rest assured he has business to transact. How does the *département* strike you?"

"Dis nigger would rather be a little higher up in the world. It will make my legs ache, to get up the mountain; dat's all, Mr. Easy," said Tom, staring at the clothes which hung upon the walls in great profusion.

"Pooh! no trick at all to go out on the sidewalk, when you are used to it: won't mind it—good, healthy exercise. And then, you should take into consideration the amount of rent: I shall tax you only six shillings; cheap as dirt," replied Mr. Easy, bent upon reducing his expenses.

"Well, I will try um, Mr. Easy; you work here, too, I s'pose?"

"Certainly; plenty of room. By the way, I'll take your name, before I forget."

"Tom, sir; they used to call me Uncle Tom."

"I have marked it down; we will consider the bargain made. If I fall in with customers—presume I shall, am about most of the time—I will recommend them to you. There's my old boots now; you can try your hand, they want glossing," remarked Mr. Easy, with a patronising air.

"I am boarding at the City Hotel," said Tom, as Mr. Easy went out of the depot with several old clothes suspended on his arm.

"Settle up there, and lodge and eat your grub at the depot, is my advice," replied Mr. Easy, and left Tom to his thoughts.

He was glad to get settled so quick, and felt encouraged with the prospect. It was necessary to be supplied with the implements of his profession, and commence work without delay. Returning to the hotel, he ate his breakfast, paid the reckoning, and notified the bar-tender of his business, and where he could be found. He supplied himself with blacking and brushes, and considered himself a made man. "Now he should really be his own master, and begin to enjoy the pleasures of freedom," he thought to himself, as he walked toward his new quarters, and became elated with the prospect.

"Gracious! the idea has jist struck me; this town am dat Jerusalem what mass'r Bates spoke about. On the borders of a beautiful lake, with broad streets and gates of pearl—so the schoolmass'r spoke um. I am
JG*

thar at last ! I 'll ax Mr. Easy when he comes. Oh ! how I wish I could see mass'r Bates, jist for a moment. I 'll take a look by-and-by," mused the fugitive, rubbing the boots.

"How d 'ye do, color'd pusson ? blacking boots for a living, hey ? Yah, yah, yah," said a hatless, shirtless, almost clotheless, grinning old negro, looking in at the door. Easy has gone into the blacking line, has he ? Success to him ; I advised him, long ago, to let old clothes be : I hates the sight of them."

Tom did not admire, particularly, either the language or manners of the stranger, and snuffed his nose at the intruder.

The stranger, nothing daunted, walked in and helped himself to the table.

"I do n't recollect observin' your countenance afore, new comer in these here parts, I expect," continued the stranger, and at the same time discharging a huge mouthful of tobacco-juice, a portion of which unluckily fell upon the boot that Tom had been at so much pains to clean.

"Blast you ! see what you have done ! I am good mind to try this on your old pate !" exclaimed the boot-black, and rising up to put his threat in execution.

"Beg you' pardon, thousand times—mistake—an accident, entirely so," said the stranger, jumping over to the other side of the table.

"If you would stay in your own quarters, I should be saved this trouble. Whar' do you stop ?" said Tom, vexed, it is true, but not caring for a personal fight.

“Over in the hollar, close by; we must be neighborly and not quarrel. If I may be so bold, what do they call your name?”

“Tom—Uncle Tom, from Virginny. If I am to see you often, s'pose you leave yours.”

“They call me ‘Old Rip.’ I am old settler here—can tell you all about this town, I know it from center to circumference; there has n't been a dog, cat, woman, or man fight, for these twenty years, but what I have had a peep in it: I make it a point, alwars, to be on hand.”

Tom dropped his boot, and stared at his visitor like a wild man.

“Oh, do n't be frightened, stranger; I am as harmless crittur as you ever see. I am charitably disposed; and it is my motto, to treat new comers with the utmost distinction; you can take my hand on that.”

Tom took up his boot again, and resumed his work. “If you know so much, perhaps you can tell me whar to find Mr. Allgood,” said he.

“Mr. All—good? I believe that's the old codger what had the hysterics, when the committee made a levy on his purse, for the benefit of the color'd race. Yes, I am most sure of it; you can ask Easy, he generally is one of the boys on that question.”

Tom worked away on the boots, until he had cleaned them to his satisfaction.

“If you know of any work in de profession, send um along; I'm now in business on my own account,” he remarked, as he put on his coat to go up the hill.

“Then, you are not clerking it for Easy?”

"No, sir: for once in my life, I am guine to see what I can do for myself."

"Success to you, Tom; stir around, don't be bashful; slam right up to them, and tell what you want—that's the way to git business. There's considerable competition in your line, now—rices rule low, and, I rather guess, considerable is done on home account; but no matter for that, we are filling up fast, and your kind of stock is in good demand."

"Thank 'ee; I'm guine in for my fortune now."

"Tom, where do you board?"

"Here, at de depot. Mr. Easy advised me to save my pennies."

"Good! I will call in and help you. Right glad you have come into this neighborhood. Ah! here comes the old man himself. Got a partner, have you, Easy? Yah! yah! yah!" said the visitor, and made for the door.

"What has that ole fellar been doing in here?" inquired Mr. Easy. "He is an old rip."

"So he told me," said Tom.

"What did he tell you?"

"He spoke his name, Old Rip."

"Pshaw! that's not his name; it is Hard—Jim Hard—a poor creature; drunk, whenever he can get so. Avoid him; he is full of tongue, and seductive," said Mr. Easy.

The fugitive found plenty to do, and flattered himself that he had opened the right vein. He worked assiduously, for he was ambitious to redeem his pledge to Dinah. His customers were abundant, and payment

prompt. Days and weeks elapsed, and finally months. He was surprised, however, that his coffers did not fill up fast. Although his receipts, considering the business he was following, were full as large as he had any right to anticipate, still, after he had made the requisite drafts upon them to liquidate the rent of six shillings per week to Mr. Easy, and supply himself with the necessaries of life, the surplus remaining was trifling, and he sometimes almost despaired of ever being able to get farther ahead. He resolved to live closer, and scrimp his expenses. It was growing late in the season, and the days were shorter, and there did not seem to be as many chance patrons. In addition to the expenses heretofore incurred to keep his bodily condition good for labor, he was now, in the month of November, compelled to make an outlay for fuel, to keep himself comfortable, and if he pursued his vocation after five of the clock in the afternoon, he must have oil or candles to light him the way to perform his work.

At the expiration of another month, his purse was empty before the usual time for settlement with Mr. Easy; and when, a few mornings before Christmas, his landlord intimated that he should desire the payment of arrears by the twenty-fifth, so that he might meet his holiday engagements, Tom's heart shrunk within him, for he knew not from whence he should obtain the requisite amount. Mr. Easy noticed Tom's emotions, and upon learning the cause, suggested that there was no occasion for despondency, as he had no doubt but that the "young bucks" of the city who

gave him their patronage, would make him a slight advance. This was a new idea; and as he was willing to turn mendicant for the time, hoping that the future had bigger gains in store for him, and thus enable him to repay his borrowings, his mind became easier, and he brushed and rubbed the boots and shoes, and carried them to the doors of his several patrons, and made their fires, and swept and dusted their apartments, and did short errands, with accustomed cheerfulness and promptitude. He did not mind the snow and cold, for his heart was warm and vigorous, and his thoughts were as gay and merry as the most flip-pant beau or lively belle that dashed along the great street of the town.

Time had run through all the holidays, and the new year was full a month old. Tom was in the depot at the foot of the hill, shivering with cold. He had been there all day, for the snow drove through the air unceasingly and furiously, and the footman could make but slow progress, so difficult was it to see, and so heavy and deep was the snow in every direction. He had been alone. Mr. Easy was ill with fever, and if well, would not have ventured out in such a blustering storm. It was after dark, and Tom had neither wood nor candles. He took every cent of money in his possession to Mr. Easy's house, the day previous, to satisfy the rent. He expected to borrow enough in the morning to purchase some wood, but the storm came on, and it was out of the question to get even a small supply. He had a fragment of a twist of bread, and a small bit of cheese left over, but that was gone now.

If he was not moneyless, it might be worth while to make an effort to reach some bakery or grocery ; but who would trust him ? And if he attempted to beg, who would have compassion on a man so able-bodied, and apparently so capable of laying in his own stores ? He ruminated upon his destitute condition, and such thoughts loomed in his imagination. He sunk back in the chair, and dropped his head between his knees. To say that he cried, and that the tears came gushing from his eyes "thick and fast," would be a tame description of his feelings. His mind was distracted, and memory carried him back to that lowly but comfortable cabin, which never seemed half so dear before. He thought of his wife, and those sweet, loved children, and the many scenes of domestic quietude through which he so often and pleasantly passed ; and how much happiness he enjoyed, as he grew from infancy to manhood. His heart was sore, lacerated, torn with sorrow and grief, and he cared but little whether or no he gazed upon the light of another sun. And yet, thought he, if I should die, what, oh ! what will become of Dinah ! I promised to send her money. She will think me an ungrateful, cold-blooded monster, that I have delayed till now ! I told her, as I flung my arms about her neck, and gave her that last kiss, if I lived to see the land of freedom, I would send her word by the post ; and to this hour have I broken my most solemn promise. Can I add ignominy to perjury ? No, no ! Father in heaven ! forgive me my sins, save me from starvation, and bless me with the light of another day. The recollection that there was a

God, in this extremity, gave him courage and strength. He had not prayed for years. And he had not looked into a bible since the Sunday before he left Oakland, but once, and then it was accidental. He drove Mrs. Brown to a quarterly meeting at Saint Catharines—a thriving village near Saint Davids—and after they returned, she handed it to him to read the chapter which contained the next. We say, he felt better after he thought of his religion; and although, every time the wind moaned through the crevices of his frail tenement, a sensation of terrific horror thrilled through his heart, his mind would involuntarily carry him to Calvary, and he thought his Saviour smiled in mercy upon his destitute, helpless condition! He saw, or at least he thought he saw, Divinity; and although the shrill, wintry, tempestuous blasts of a northern latitude silently but constantly crept over his limbs, and streaked through every part of his body, this warmed his heart and banished loneliness. His feelings became less excited, and he laid down upon his bed to await in patience the coming of another day.

The clouds had cleared away, the wind was hushed—the elements were calm, and the sun shone brightly, when Tom opened his eyes on the ensuing morning. He crawled out from beneath the pile of clothes, which he contrived in the darkness to draw, one after the other, upon his shivering body, and made an effort to go outside the door. But his progress was arrested by a huge bank of snow at the entrance. He needed a shovel, or spade, or something of the kind, to make an opening. He seized the poker, and undertook to

break a path, but the snow lay so compact and deep that he did not make much headway. He had not eaten anything but a morsel of bread and cheese, in the past twenty-four hours, and was weak. He again began to despair, and lament his obstinacy. If he had taken Dinah's counsel, and turned a deaf ear to mass'r Bates, he should not now be contending with cold and hunger.

He thought he would try another expedient to make a path, by throwing the whole weight of his body upon the snow, and wallowing through it. He met with no better success; and exhausted by the effort, he gave up the undertaking, and remained in the drift, for it was as difficult to go back as forward. A dizziness came over him, and the light receded from his vision. He was soon senseless, and his limbs stiffened with the cold. He had lain in this condition some time, when a passer-by upon the sidewalk above, happening to cast his eyes downward into the hollow, observed him, and supposing that he was dead, did not hail him; but in humanity communicated the information to an overseer of the poor. Lest all vitality might not yet be extinguished, this messenger of charity hastened to remove the body from the snow, and ere long had it deposited in a store near by. The overseer found that the man breathed, and he applied the necessary restoratives.

Luckily, Tom had the full benefit of an unclouded sun, as he lay in his perilous position, or the frost would have nipped the seat of life. It was not long, however, after his body felt the genial influence of a warm fire,

before he began to throw off the stupor and return to his senses.

He was bewildered. He had been dreaming. It was not reality. How came he in the store? And who was this man, pouring oil upon his swollen hands and inflamed limbs? It was not mass'r Gravity, and yet he seemed to be as attentive and obliging, in alleviating his pains and soothing his wounds.

Tom finally appreciated these acts of benevolence, and felt thankful that he was not left to die. He told the merchant, in brief, the history of his life for the past four years, and how difficult he now found it, to procure the means of subsistence.

"Buffalo is a hard place, in the winter, for the poor—nothing to do," said the merchant, having less pity for the negro because he abandoned so good quarters at the South.

"I do not find the place mass'r Bates described to us so often."

"And you never will," added the merchant.

"It can't be possible dat he meant to deceive," said Tom, raising himself partly up from the blanket.

"It is possible—it is a fact, and so you will find, that he deceived you; whether he meant to do it, is a question for his own conscience," replied the merchant.

"I almost begin to believe you. I find everything different from what I expected," said Tom, again laying down.

"Hard times, eh?"

"Yas, sir, hard times; don't see sich in ole Virginy."

"If I was in your place, I should make tracks for my cabin the first opportunity. I should n't mind the being free. Slavery, with plenty to eat and drink, and enough to wear, before freedom and starvation, would be my motto," said the merchant.

Tom groaned sorrowfully.

"It's thawin' out, eh? Poor fellow, I pity you; but you must grin and bear it. Mr. Long has done the fair thing by you. What an untiring fellow Long is! Always at his post, rain or shine, cold or hot. I declare, I do n't know what all the poor people would do, down there in the first ward, if it was n't for him. They say he is getting rich; I hope such is the case; he ought to get rich. The town would be overrun with beggars, if it was n't for him. Would you like to chaw a cracker, Tom?" asked the merchant.

"Thank 'e; I hab eatin' noffin since yesterday morning."

"How do you feel?" asked the merchant, preferring to remove him, if he was threatened with illness, to some other place.

"Bad, sir; berry bad; I 'm afeerd this freezing will throw me into sickness. I dunno what will become of me," replied the negro, dejected, and caring but little what *did* become of him.

"I think you would do better, if placed in a more comfortable bed. Besides, the noise of business will retard your convalescence. Are you not acquainted with some person of your own color?"

"I know'd Jim Hard."

"Humph! that old rip has no place for you; I

shouldn't wonder if he was under the snow himself. But it's all the same; there is no danger of his stiffening; he carries too much whiskey in his boiler ever to get cold."

"Also, Mr. Easy."

"Easy — let me see — ah! yes; Easy I know. In good circumstances, and very likely man. Well, I'll send up and see what he can do for you. Lives on Vine street, I believe," said the merchant; and calling his porter, directed him to go and inform Mr. Easy of Tom's situation. The invalid was requested to make himself as comfortable in the meantime, as his situation would permit.

CHAPTER XXVI.

UNCLE TOM'S SOLILOQUY.

The fugitive's body was badly frozen; fever ensued, and he was thrown into sickness for several weeks. Mr. Easy could not accommodate him with a separate room, being ill himself; but fortunately he found convenient accommodations in a colored family that lived upon the same street. He received kind attention and careful nursing; and although his life was despaired of, when the disease was at its crisis, a rugged constitution, under the management of a skillful physician, withstood the furious disease, and the fever abated. It was long after the snow disappeared, however, before he could walk with comfort.

Tom was anxious to resume his profession; for the good, attentive doctor must not only be paid, but he had run in debt for medicine. And last, though by no means least in his heart, was the desire to recompense with liberality the faithful nurse, who unremittingly stood by his bedside to administer to all his little wants, and soothe and pacify him in his sickest

hours. No sum of money seemed too large to give her. He had the benefit of her fuel and lights for weeks, in the coldest of winter. The price for these articles was high, and she was in need of, and ought to have what she had actually paid out immediately. She "took in washing" to raise the means of defraying the maintenance of herself and children, her husband having died some two years before. And to meet the rent on April quarter-day, she had been compelled to borrow from a friend.

Tom's old customers had gone elsewhere to get their boots cleaned, and he must look up new patrons. The owner of the hollow had torn down the depot, preparatory to the erection of larger and more substantial buildings, and it was necessary to find new quarters. He hobbled down the hill, the first day it was deemed prudent for him "to venture out," and looked among the rubbish for his brushes, and the boxes of blacking which he purchased the day previous to the snow-storm. But he could not find them, and his stock in trade had not only vanished, but with it had gone also the implements of his profession. He thought he was worse off than when he first came to Buffalo. He was not so much of a stranger now, but he then was free from debt, and had money in his purse. Now, he had none, and a debt which appeared large in his eyes now hung over him; and that too of the most sacred character. He limped back to Vine street, and frankly told the washer-woman his situation. She was not prepared to hear it; for, in the wild paroxysms of a delirious brain, he often talked of money, fortune, palaces, and the

like, and the humble nurse thought her patient to be ambitious in health, and favored with a reasonable share of this world's goods. And now, when the honest boot-black told her the simple truth, it was an awful disappointment. She regretted that she had labored under such great misapprehension, and yet was not sorry that she had been able to be so charitable to the poor fugitive. He still enjoyed her beneficence, and she disliked to turn him away. But it was necessary to devise some means to enable him to commence business again on his own account. He could hire out as a servant, but then he was lame, and probably would continue so for months to come. He told her about his friend, Mr. Allgood, and how he had not yet seen him. She found a directory, in the grocery on the opposite side of the street, and learned where the gentleman was to be found; and it was deemed proper and advisable for the fugitive to give him a call.

Tom was not so well the next day, and it was wet and blustering. He did not go out. The next day succeeding, he felt the effects of venturing "to the hollow," as he called it. He had taken cold, and the good washer-woman would not consent that he should so soon again expose himself to the inclement weather. He accordingly remained within doors. It was, perhaps a week before he sought out Mr. Allgood. He had tried, many a time, to find him, but unenlightened by the directory, his travels through the many streets of Buffalo were in vain. He never enjoyed that pleasure. Unable to appreciate the mentor who had been

consulted by his friend, he did not now, to tell the truth, entertain very sanguine hopes of seeing him. But necessity, the mother of invention, was, in his case at least, the mother of exertion. He started out from Vine street, determined to find the object of his search, if possible. He followed the direction; and within half an hour, was ushered into his presence. Strange to say, Tom rung the bell at the front door; and, what was still more remarkable, the servant who answered it invited him to be seated in the sitting-room. Mr. Allgood soon made his appearance.

"Ah! you are the man I saw at Saint Davids, I think," said he, as he entered the room.

"Yas, sir."

"So, you adopted my advice, and have come to Buffalo, have you?"

"Yas, sir; I thought I could n't do better," replied Tom, in a bashful and hesitating voice.

"Well, this is a good season of the year. You will meet with no difficulty in succeeding, if you are industrious. You must work, though; the people in the States work."

"Yas, sir," replied Tom, in a still meeker voice.

"What do you propose to do?" inquired Mr. Allgood, noticing that the fugitive answered in monosyllables.

"Wait on gemmen, sir," said Tom, in a still meeker voice, if it was possible so to do.

"Wait on gentlemen, did you say?" quickly asked Mr. Allgood, rather surprised at the answer.

"Yas, sir."

"In what capacity, pray?"

"Cleaning their boots, rooms, and the like, sir."

"Ah! well, perhaps that may pay," replied Mr. Allgood, somewhat disappointed; for he thought, as he was an able-bodied man, he would aspire to some higher and, as he viewed it, more lucrative employment. "You must be active, and up early and late. If so, there will be no difficulty in succeeding," he added, after a pause.

"Yas, sir; I have had some experience in de profession," said the fugitive, with evident reluctance.

"Have you, indeed! Where, pray?"

"Here, in dis town," replied Tom.

"In Buffalo! when?" inquired Mr. Allgood, in astonishment.

"Oh! yas, sir; dat I have," replied Tom; and at the same time drawing a long, deep sigh.

"When? I ask. It was my impression you now visited our city for the first time."

"Oh! sir, I came across the river right away arter I saw you at Saint Davids, last fall," said Tom, with more courage, and in a fuller tone of voice.

"You have been heré since last fall, and have not let me see you until now!"

"I inquired arter you often, but was so busy in my profession dat I had no time to hunt you up," said Tom, beginning to feel less a stranger.

"Well, I am happy you have called upon me at last," remarked Mr. Allgood in a very bland voice.

"I know'd you would be glad to see me; I told Nelly so," said Tom, his countenance beaming with pleasure.

"And who is Nelly, pray?"

"Oh! she is the washwoman on Vine street. I did n't know but you might recollect her, sir."

"Oh!—ah!—Nelly—not far from Easy's house. Yes—yes; I do now call her to mind. Honest woman! Do you stay there?"

"Yas, sir, I board there," replied Tom; and if Mr. Allgood had taken the trouble, he would have seen a tear or two glisten in the eyes of the fugitive; but his attention just then was called to the street to see a pair of handsome blood bays trot by at full speed.

"Well, can I do anything for you?" inquired Mr. Allgood, turning from the window.

"Dat's why I spoke to Nelly 'bout coming here," said Tom, regretting that he postponed the visit so long. "I come to see if you would help me."

Mr. Allgood seemed puzzled. He did not comprehend why the fugitive should so soon be in want. Tom explained.

"I am afraid that you was not sufficiently industrious. Do you drink?" inquired Mr. Allgood, after hearing the negro through.

"No, mass'r, neber; I despise um."

"Your sickness is natural enough; and I recollect the storm well. Unusual; and it came on suddenly. We had a warm January, though; the ice had not formed even in 'the creek.' And, really, if you was steady and stuck to your business; I can't understand why you should have been so necessitous."

"I hab told you de truth, mass'r. I paid to Mr. Easy all my money, to the last cent."

"I guess you must have taken a cruise with Hard, occasionally. Bad man—very bad man; never does anything but drink, and loiter around the tippling shops. He was so near you, I am afraid you sometimes kept him company. It was a wrong neighborhood. But, you must live and learn, I suppose. I am sorry."

"It is no sich thing, mass'r; dis nigger 'tended his own business. I took the advice you gib me at Saint Davids; up early an' late; my trouble am 'evitable," said Tom with much pertness of manner. "You injure my feelings, mass'r Allgood, when you talk so; dat you do," he added in a more subdued tone.

"Pshaw! you should n't get angry. I am a plain, blunt man; I always express my sentiments freely."

"Dat I do n't mind so much, mass'r; it's de down-right falsehood what wakes me up."

"Well, I guess you are pretty honest; the story hangs well together, at any rate. I must go down town; call and see me again; shall be always glad to learn of your prosperity," remarked Mr. Allgood, and opened the door.

"You are not guine to turn um off so, mass'r, are you? Nelly thought you would be so good as to help poor Tom along a bit; I dislikes to turn beggar, but if you could help me to a few dollars, it would be of great sarvice. I should go right into business agin," said the fugitive, with a trembling voice, and hat in his hand, ready to leave.

"I husband my resources; I can't afford to be giving, every day," said Mr. Allgood, shaking his head.

"You mistake my meaning, mass'r; I only want to borrow, for a short time. I s'pect to pay back in a few weeks; Nelly said that 's what I 'm to do."

"Pooh! any money I may give you, will not come back; I shall never see it again," remarked Mr. Allgood, gruffly.

Tom was at a loss what to say. He thought his friend had no heart; he expected different treatment. He stood a moment, rumbling his hat, and become more angry than sorrowful. Mr. Allgood went into the hall, and returned with an overcoat, and put it on.

"Come, sir, time is precious with me; I must go down town," said he.

Tom was not in so great hurry.

"You refuse to help me, then? Blast the white man's friendship! down South, the poor negro would not be left to shift in dis way."

"Can't help it; I must husband my money."

"Are you not the friend of color'd man?"

"Certainly; I lend all my influence to benefit their lowly, down-trodden condition; but when it comes to giving money outright to the slave, that 's more than I contracted for. It is enough for me to spend my time in getting up and attending meetings, and discussing the subject; that, let me tell you, costs money. No, no; if we are able to run you into freedom, that 's all that can be expected. You must now take care of yourself," replied Mr. Allgood, with much emphasis, and Tom followed him into the street, and with a dejected spirit, bid him good morning.

Mr. Allgood, glad to get rid of his acquaintance, walked rapidly along the sidewalk, and suddenly turning around a corner, relieved himself of the negro's company. The broken-hearted fugitive picked his way back to Vine street. The task was irksome, for the walk was icy in many places, and as yet he could not dispense with the crutch.

"Tom, you look down in the mouth," said Nelly, as he hobbled up the steps. "Bad luck?"

"Yes, the world goes wrong with me."

"Did n't you see Mr. Allgood?"

"Yas, Nelly; but dar was no good for dis body. All wrong!" said the fugitive with a sigh, and helping himself to a chair.

"What! you do n't say that gentleman turned you away empty?"

"It's true, Nelly."

"Good gracious! who would have thought it?"

"Bad people in dis world; I'm tired of living."

"Well, well; I've no more to say, if Mr. Allgood turns his back on us color'd people, too. Why, he pretends the greatest friendship. I must run over and tell Easy. He *will* be thunderstruck. Oh! he is now off arter ole clothes; I'll see him at noon."

"Mass'r Allgood, I reckon, thinks more of pennies than souls."

"I can't believe it, Tom. If I did n't know you, I would n't believe it, so there! Why, how often I have seen him come into the church, and join in the exercises; it is n't four weeks, hardly—jist afore 'lection—

since he actually come to our prayer-meeting ! I can't believe it — I do n't believe it, so, now ! You misunderstood him, Tom. Why, if he had actually put his hand into his pocket, and took out a ten-dollar bill, he would n't have missed it an hour afterwards. What does he care for money ? he has oceans of it. Why, come to think of it, I heard him say, with his own lips, last winter, standing over there at the corner grocery, and of his own accord, that he would give half his fortune to root slavery out of the country ! Tom, I'm suspicious you got hold the wrong man. Where did you go ? tell the truth, now," said Nelly.

"To de place you told of."

"Did you actually call him by name ?"

"To be sure, I did, several times — no mistake. An' do n't you s'pose I know'd him ? Did n't I seed him at Saint Davids ? and did n't he say to me to come to dis town ? No, no, no ; I know'd who I was talkin' to, Nelly. It was no body else, but mass'r Allgood : it was de man himself."

"Well, you speak so reasonable, I s'pects I must believe you," replied the washer-woman, reluctantly giving credit to Tom's assertion.

The gate that opened into a little yard in front of the house creaked, accompanied with a sort of crash, as if something had fallen. Nelly run to the window.

"If there is n't that old rip, Jim Hard ! Fell down on the sidewalk, and tipsy as a lord, I'll be bound ! Yah, yah, yah ! he's tryin' to come in ; how he staggers ! What in creation has brought him up here so early in the morning ?" exclaimed Nelly.

Tom hopped to the window, also, and the washer-woman went to the door and opened it.

"What's wanted?" she asked.

"Do you keep neighbor Tom here, yet?" answered Hard.

"Yes."

"What are you doing with so much ice—keeping it for summer, eh? I shall complain to his—hic—honor—hic—I think—hic—Nelly. Clear the road—hic—and give this vessel room—hic—to sail into harbor," said the old negro, and made an effort to enter the house.

"This is no place for you, Mr. Hard, so you can jist move back, and go your way," said Nelly, and put her hands upon his shoulders, to prevent his entrance. She did not push him, lest he might fall over backwards. He struggled, and begged to be admitted.

"Let the old fellar come in, and rest," said Tom; "he will do no harm."

"Too early in the morning to excuse such free drinking. He ought to know better than to come away up here into Vine street with such a jog. He won't do much hurt; come along, but mind and be quiet," said Nelly, finally consenting to let the old negro pass the door.

Hard availing himself of the permission, stumbled into the hall, and the washer-woman closed the door, for she did not wish the people in that vicinity to think she kept a disorderly house—she had too much pride of character.

Hard had not seen Tom since the snow-storm, and

learning his whereabouts, took it into his head to call up and see him. The old negro possessed a kind disposition, and was harmless; his fault was constant and excessive drinking. Whisky was his beverage, and how he continued to get it, at all times, was the wonder to those who knew him. He rarely engaged in any work, except to do occasional errands. He was known to beg his clothing, and it was generally supposed, that he begged his whisky, also. He took considerable fancy to Tom—not because the latter could be considered a boon companion, for, to his praise, be it said, he let liquor alone. The truth was, Hard first saw the light in middle Tennessee, and never having paid his master the price of his services, was equally a fugitive with Tom. “Birds of a feather flock together,” and hence his partiality for the boot-lack. He had drank too much on the morning in question to be talkative; probably it was a continuation of the previous day’s carousing. Nelly allowed him to occupy the big rocking-chair, and he fell into a doze. He waked up in time for dinner, and learning that his brother fugitive had not re-established himself in business, proposed a co-partnership. The washer-woman cut the conversation short, by suggesting that his company was anything but agreeable, and the old negro, after displaying much ill-temper that Nelly should interfere with his private affairs, left the house.

Tom did not venture out again, but kept within doors, brooding over his disappointments. A critical observer would have come to the conclusion that his thoughts were not all the time confined to the great

city in which he then happened to be, but occasionally were roaming in another clime. Nelly took occasion to inform her neighbor Easy of the interview with Mr. Allgood, and both were surprised. "Can it be true," they both said, "that he was becoming lukewarm in the cause?"

Nelly began to evince some impatience to have Tom at work, and it was arranged that he should use the kitchen, if he could find any customers, and trust to luck to get sufficient money to repay what she borrowed. Mr. Easy advised this course, and his views usually were found to be correct.

Accordingly, the next day Tom went up to Main street, and looked around for work. He strolled some distance, and finally met the merchant, who stopped, and kindly inquired after his health.

"Your appearance indicates that you have had a siege. Not entirely over it yet, I presume," said he.

"Thank 'ee, sir; hard sick," replied Tom, at the same time uncovering his head, and making a respectful bow.

"At your old trade, I perceive," said the merchant, pointing to a pair of boots dangling upon Tom's arm.

"Yas, sir; dis is my first job."

"Ah!" politely exclaimed the merchant.

"Yes, sir, I 'm hard up; much in debt."

"Well, if you have your health, there 's no occasion for low spirits; you must work the harder; I understood you to say, you left your master. I can't say I approve of that; but I like your looks, and pity your misfortune. My clerks, I presume, will patronize you.

Give them a call," said the merchant, and passed along.

Tom felt encouraged ; these few words were cheering to his heart, and when he reached the merchant's door, he took the liberty to walk in. He was recognized as the negro whom Mr. Long brought into the store for dead.

"It 's the same old fellow, by jings !" said one of the clerks.

"I never expected to see him again," said another.

"I'll be hanged if Jack Frost did n't put his grip on you !" said the porter, going up to him to take a closer view.

All, he thought, were glad to see him alive, and put him many questions. In the meantime, the merchant himself came in.

"Boys," said he, "can't you give the old man a lift ? He tells me, he wants work in his line."

"Yes, he can take my boots," said one.

"There 's a coat you can tinker up," said another.

"Then you run under, did you, Tom ?" asked the merchant.

"Yas, sir, to my sorrow ; it threw me out of business, an' I am in debt to Nelly."

"And pray, who is Nelly ?"

Tom explained.

"Oh, I know her," said one of the clerks, "she has washed for me, and does her work well."

"How much do you stand in her debt, Tom ?"

"Not far from twenty dollars, I s'pects."

"If I lend you a quarter of it, do you believe you can ever refund it?" asked the merchant.

"I'll try, sir, if you will be so berry good."

"Well, there it is. The holidays did not bring you any presents, I take it."

"No, mass'r, no; poor Tom was groaning with pain, then."

"Well, you have one now; so cheer up," said the merchant, with a pleasant smile.

Tom took the money; but his heart was so full of thanks that he knew not what to say in return.

"De Lor' bless you, mass'r—de Lor bless you!" he at last uttered, and with many bows to the merchant and his clerks, left the store, and returned to Vine street.

"I wonder if Allgood would have done that?" remarked the merchant, after Tom shut the door.

The unexpected beneficence, and coming from a man with such views upon the slavery question as this merchant was known to entertain, excited the wonder of Mr. Easy, and constituted his principal topic of conversation for weeks to come. Neither was he idle in circulating the intelligence. The fugitive cared but little about the merchant's views; he was thankful for the well-timed charity, and it encouraged him to make efforts to gain a respectable subsistence. He frequently called at the store, to take away and carry back the boots and clothes, as well for himself as for Nelly, and never failed to remember his benefactor. Lameness had left his body, although the deep scars of the frost king still remained. His receipts were not

as large as they were when he worked in the hollow, but the quarters were more agreeable, and with economy, he continued to pay his way.

He tried to be happy; he was determined to be happy. He had traveled, he knew not how far; abandoned Dinah—the children; took his last look at the cabin; wandered over bog and through swamps; encamped in the forest, with no weapons but his own sinewy arms to repel the attack of man or beast; gone asleep, with the eternal howl of the wolf, and the sharp, frantic, piercing cries of the panthers, chaunting their hideous, terrific anthems; swam the cold, shivering waters of the St. Lawrence; and lain for days at the very portals of that dark valley—the shadow of death! he had endured enough to be a freeman! “Why,” thought he, “why should I not now enjoy its beatitude?”

It was an evening—we said evening! it was nearer “the noon of night,”—the day had been intensely hot; a cloud had gathered in the western horizon, dark as Erebus, emitted its lightning, roared its thunder, poured down its torrent of water, and passed from sight; the sun “was out again,” and the Lake, stretching far away towards its setting, appeared, indeed, kind reader, like “a sea of molten gold,”—if you wish to see, with your own eyes, such a sunset as your own favorite Byron, or adored Scott, has described to you, you should have been with our Tom, as he sat alone on Erie’s beach, and beheld, with thrilling emotions, the God of day pass quietly to rest, below the main, as gently and calmly as the infant upon the bosom of

its mother. He thought of Dinah; and oh! how fervently he prayed in his heart, that he might take unto himself wings, and fly away to his native Oakland! He thought of Emily, and wondered if she was in the heaven he saw before him! He looked upon the long range of woods, extending up the coast beyond the ken of his vision, and marveled if the landscape illuminated by the dazzling effulgence of the sun, was emblematical of the city of his God, "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens:" and now, at the dead of night, stretched upon his humble bed, cribbed in an insignificant garret, reposing—from what? not the labor of a stalwart man, with head erect, and a spirit uncowed by past or present fears of starvation; but the toil of threading the streets and alleys of a metropolis, to gain a pittance to gratify the necessary wants of to-day, ignorant of what the morrow might bring forth! "Small encouragement was this, and an unequal recompense," thought the fugitive, "for the anxieties and privations of a thousand miles of pilgrimage, to be called a freeman."

"If this am mass'r Bates' Kanon, give dis nigger ole Egypt, wid plenty o' corn and hoecake," said Tom to himself, and so restless did he become, that he got up and paced the room.

His thoughts were busy. He looked out of the window—pshaw! this word fails to give the idea; it was a hole scarcely big enough to protrude his head through—and gazed at the sky. It was cloudless; and there were stars. "Are they the same," he mused, "that lighted the heavens the night I lay at

the hovel in the lane, and listened to the sweet music from the Elms?" This thought brought vividly to his mind the punishment.

"War I sich a fool! act ugly to massa, 'kase I was too old to hold my own with young Hector? Let me try um agin, an' mass'r oberseer would n't be obliged to turn dat ole padlock, an' leave me to die; I would act like oder niggers—go home to my cabin, eat hearty, an' sleep so soundly; dat would I, eeny how."

Nelly heard footsteps overhead. She was afraid thieves were in the house: she might be mistaken, and lay still and listened. She heard them again. And now she could not be mistaken. Tom was up there—probably asleep. They would steal his scanty stock of clothing, and then what would he do? It would ruin him; he certainly would give it up, and be worse than old Hard! She could not endure the thought, and ventured to go to the garret door. She opened it softly, stood a moment, and all was silence. They heard her, she thought, and were still. Presently, a sound, like hard, heavy breathing, caught her ear.

"There, there!" she audibly exclaimed, "they are taking his life! Oh! Tom, Tom!" and rushed up the stairs, and met him at the top. There was hardly light enough for them to recognize each other.

"Nelly, is this you? I thought it was your voice. What's the matter?" said the fugitive, seizing her arms.

"Why, Tom, are you awake! and alone? I thought they were murdering you! What ails you, to be up at this time o' night?"

"I have a spell on me. I'm soliloquizing, Nelly ; dat 's all."

"Pooh ! how you frightened me ! Get to bed, or you will be too late in the offices, in the morning," she replied, and descended the stairs, vexed that she should be alarmed so foolishly.

Tom appreciated the advice, and tried again to sleep. The dame was coy, and he did little more than drowse, until it was time to go to Main street. He felt unpleasantly, as he moped along the alley to his work.

"This comes o' it, by guine to de state of freedom. Blast mass'r Bates ! I would like to lay my hands on him some morning. Den he would see "my feelings" in earnest. Oh, ho ! dar is a man yonder on de sidewalk what looks jist like him," said Tom to himself, and quickened his step to overtake the schoolmaster.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ALARM.

“If you allow any passion, even though it be esteemed innocent, to acquire an ascendant, your inward peace will be impaired.”

BLAIR'S SERMONS.

The greatest foible in Tom's character was obstinacy. Not so much self-willed in judgment as inflexible in purpose. He possessed, in fact, a docile, amiable disposition. He would not inflict a blow upon the body of a fellow-being from mere wantonness ; neither would he pierce the heart with a rough remark or personal inuendo, unless in self-defence. But he was not wayward. He acted affirmatively. Easy and willing to be taught ; yet, if the instructor closed the book, or proposed to open some new chapter in the volume of life, it would be unsafe to count with certainty upon Tom. He might change the path, or he might go on in the old track, even if it conducted him to destruction.

To this master passion may be traced his unwillingness to listen to Dinah, and remain on the plantation. To the same cause may be attributed his disinclination

to adopt the advice of Kitty and Mrs. Brown, and stay at the inn in Saint Davids. He was under the tuition of Mr. Bates in the first instance; and in the latter, he was taking lessons from his friend, Allgood. In both cases, he had reached the conclusion, and the admonition came too late. He was too obstinate to be fickle-minded; his will could not change with every passing breeze. If he did not enjoy tranquillity, and misfortune attended his efforts after happiness, it was not because he lacked the desire for it, or was destitute of an enterprising spirit. His labor was misdirected, and he would not heed his errors when kindness pointed them out. He allowed himself to become discontented on the plantation. He sought happiness in Canada, but did not find it. He was now in Buffalo, searching daily for the same object.

If the prize which the fugitive sought was covered up in money or property, it can not be said that he was making very encouraging progress. He soon began to think that the fortune which dazzled his imagination was a phantom, for he not only did not acquire wealth, but, on the contrary, it was with extreme difficulty, and, as it seemed to him, great over-exertion, that he earned enough to supply actual necessities. In his walks about the city, he saw many large buildings, filled with immense stocks of goods of all descriptions; and many splendid edifices, in which the people lived in elegance and luxury. He could not traverse the long and broad avenue which extended from the water far on to the hills that overlooked the town, without beholding some of the citizens

riding in their costly carriages, or promenading the walk clad in the richest apparel; and all appearing merry with enjoyment. If he turned his eyes to the beautiful, though sometimes turbulent bay, its waters were whitened with many a departing and returning sail; he could not pass along the wharves and docks, without beholding flour, pork, and corn enough, he thought, to supply a market for the entire world. If perchance he paused at the square where, for the first time, he witnessed the flag of his country mourning the loss of an estimable citizen, or stepped into the side streets which lead into the surrounding country, he could feast his eyes upon wagon and cart loads of the choicest productions of the soil; and an army almost of farmers, whose very appearance indicated thrift and good living. And yet he strove as diligently to obtain these means of happiness, and was constantly disappointed. He was told that the whites were the lucky owners.

"These gemmen inherit their property, like massa Erskine, or else white men must have bigger brains, and know how to take care of themselves better than us slaves," he frequently muttered to himself, as, day after day, he returned to the kitchen on Vine street.

Our story has run into the month of July. It was a stormy morning, and the weather was so cold that, although in the midst of summer, a blazing fire was comfortable. Tom had been to the street, and waited upon his customers. If he had seen the schoolmaster, he was unfortunate not to be able to overtake him. He lost sight of him after he passed the first block.

Tom and Nelly remained at the breakfast table longer than usual. She had not forgotten the affright, and had many questions to ask concerning his propensity to somnambulism.

"Tom, as long as you live here, do n't you frighten me so again."

"Oh! I was thinkin' of home; dat's all."

"Of home! Why, this is your home."

"I know'd it; but I was thinkin' of my oder home, down South."

"You have left there forever! do n't think any more of it," said Nelly, who was pleased with the disposition and deportment of her boarder.

Tom made no reply; he was pensive.

"What you thinking of now?" inquired Nelly, in a peculiarly affectionate tone of voice.

"How de white folks enjoy all the happiness," Tom replied.

"La sakes! how you talk! I guess we colored citizens have our share. I don't see what should put that into your head, Tommy."

"'Kase they own all de big stores, an' hosses and gigs, an' wear all de nice clothes. Color'd gemmen go 'foot."

"Oh, you great dunce! Do n't you suppose we have good times? And what does it signify? We work week days, and rest on the Sabbath. Then, do n't we go to church?" said Nelly.

"Can't say as to dat; I hab not been much, you know."

"Well, you walk without your crutch now, and if

you can get rid of your pride, you may go with me to-morrow, Sunday school an' all. I have a class, you know."

"I'll do dat. I'm 'most asham'd for neglectin' meeting so long. But my mind has been filled with property; an' den agin, I couldn't go on my ole crutch—I should be laughed at; you know'd dat, Nelly?"

"Yes, yes; you are mighty proud, I know'd—particularly so, for an ole man—yah! yah! yah!"

Tom did not mention to Nelly that he had a glimpse of the schoolmaster, who was uppermost in his mind, and he thought he would stray up into the town, and go to the hotels. The storm subsided, and he wandered about from place to place most of the day; he did not return home until after dusk. Unable to find Mr. Bates, he came to the conclusion that he had taken some one else for his old friend, and thought no more of it. He brushed up what boots he had lugged home, and as he did not get much sleep the previous night, went to bed earlier than usual. Nelly would have been glad to have had him remain up a little longer; but she felt fatigued herself, and made no remark. The fugitive and washerwoman slept late. Nelly, because she had no shirts to iron; Tom, because he had not a boot—strange to say—to deliver. What he brought home with him, after his stroll for the schoolmaster, were cast-off leather, so it turned out, not intended for Sunday wear. Upon taking a count, there were only six, and those mostly worn out. The lawyer, doctor, and tradesman kept these for extra

occasions — such as, for instance, reader, an excursion to the woods of Cattaraugus, to spear trout; or a walk to the Indian Reservation, to collect herbs, so that the heart may not stop its pulsations before age has attained to three-score and ten; or a sail to Grand Island. The first for health, the second for science, the third — not for amusement merely, if it occurred on the first day on the week, but to worship God in his living presence! Tom *felt* it to be the Lord's day. He put on a tidy shirt, a clean pair of pantaloons — color, white — and over this, in front, extending down to his knees, as nice an apron as Nelly could make for him. He was particular in combing his head — it hardly looked natural, he had fixed it up so much. He was ready for church before the hour, and wondered why the bells did not ring. Nelly dressed her front hair in curls, (it was not straight, and hence, by some, she was pronounced to be mulatto,) she put on her best calico dress, and looked neat. This was not all. She wore — not a handkerchief, bright with red or yellow tints — but a plain white muslin cap, such as might be seen on many a white lady, on ordinary days.

“Tom,” said Nelly, “why don't you put on that white linen roundabout which the merchant give you? It's starched stiff. You should not wear that apron; it's unbecoming.”

“Too hot; and dis nigger am not proud,” replied Tom.

As the bells of the several churches pealed forth their solemn chime, Tom and Nelly walked over to

the-colored Sunday school. The children were not very prompt in attendance. The teachers, with the exception of Nelly, were as tardy in their attendance as the pupils. The hour designated was nine o'clock, but it was nearer ten before they reached the room. She did not wait for the others, but as soon as a portion of her class arrived, commenced the exercise of hearing the little boys and girls recite the few passages of scripture which, at the previous school, they were directed to commit to memory. She removed the straw bonnet from her head, for she thought it unbecoming. Tom was interested, and pleased with the appearance of the children. He patted their heads, and praised them for being so good. After Nelly heard her class through, they went above and took their seats, to hear the minister. He preached upon the subject of repentance, to a large and attentive congregation. Tom heard every word, and appeared more devout than Nelly had seen him at any time before. This especially pleased her, for she had the reputation of being, and no doubt was, a sincere Christian. After church was over, they returned home in company. Tom reproached himself for not being more regular in going to meeting, and resolved that he would resume his morning and evening prayers.

"You saw many good-looking people at church to-day, did n't you, Tom?" asked Nelly, as they were sipping their tea.

"O yas."

"Property is not all confined to the white folks: we are some, ourselves," she added.



SUNDAY SCHOOL.

"No big fortins among um ; they must work jist as color'd people do whar I come from," replied Tom.

"You forget that they are their own masters ; do n't have to budge as the whim of the tyrant dictates. Mighty difference ! "

"I know'd dat ; an' if they do n't git work, must starve or beg ! Dunno, dunno," said Tom, shaking his head.

"You will like our society better, when you get naturalized to it. Things will come round right, by-and-by," said Nelly.

The fugitive prayed that night, for the first time since he came to the land of freedom, and the washer-woman joined him in his devotion. It reminded him of the cabin, and he felt more at home. He kissed the children, as he retired to the garret, and wished Nelly pleasant dreams.

It was his habit to rise early, for it was difficult to sleep after daylight. But the next morning found him stirring earlier than usual. The sun was not up when he reached the creek. He was looking for some chance-work. Occasionally he slipped a sixpence or shilling into his pocket, for carrying a valise or carpet-bag from the steamboat to the railroad depot, or some private residence. He had but one office to sweep, and, as he passed "the churches," he descried a steamboat coming rapidly into port. He had hurried down to the wharf, thinking he should have an abundance of time to attend to the office afterward. There were several persons engaged in soliciting the patronage of passengers : others with strong, heavy canes in their

hands, indicating that they were there to keep the peace; and these, with almost any number of hackney coachmen, drivers of baggage-wagons, and carmen, created a very respectable crowd, in point of size. All made a rush for the gangway of the boat, the instant the officer in command pulled the bell to stop the wheels, and Tom among the rest.

It turned out to be the boat from Perrysburgh and Toledo, Captain ——, an old veteran in the service, and popular with the traveling public. There was much hurrying to and fro, as well on the part of the passengers as gentlemen from on shore, who kindly offered to take them in charge, and to such a degree that, to some of the passengers, the offer became exceedingly offensive. Tom had not yet succeeded in obtaining any baggage, and was jostling his way to the upper deck. As he reached the foot of the stairs to go up into the ladies' saloon, whom should he behold but his young master Frederick! He quickly stopped, to turn around; but the pressure was too strong, and he was wedged in so tight, that he found it difficult even to turn his face. He cast his eye above, to see whether his person was recognized, and was glad to observe his young master still talking to some person inside the saloon. He redoubled his efforts to relieve himself from the unpleasant position, and succeeded, after receiving a bruise or two from the baggage which was in process of transshipment, and more curses from the various porters who were crowding the gangway. Once ashore, he did not look back to make any further discoveries but scampered though

a narrow alley into a street, less frequented by the public conveyances, and retreated to the office. He commenced his work there, and notwithstanding he would not, for the price of himself, be seen by Frederick, yet so great was his anxiety to catch another glance of his young master, he could not refrain from keeping up an almost constant lookout, as omnibus and carriage, one after the other, passed up the street. He either did not look out at the right time, or he had mistaken some other person for Frederick. He could not be mistaken: he knew that the gentleman whom he had seen was his young master; he had not altered in the least particular.

Tom was not so particular to make the suit of rooms look nice; he felt anxious to learn more of Frederick. Perhaps he was in quest of his runaway slave. Perhaps the old master was dead, and his young master succeeding to the estate, had commenced searching anew for his lost property. The more he reflected upon the incident at the boat, the more uneasy he became.

Having swept out the rooms, Tom did not stop to dust the furniture, books, and law papers, but "cut the work short," and turning out of Main, took Pearl street in his course, to avoid passing the principal hotels.

"Nelly," said he, as soon as he entered the house, "I hab bin scar'd worse than you war, oder night."

"What now, Tom?"

"I seed my young master Frederick, down at the boat."

"Why, Tom, is that so? Then you must go right over the river, to Canada; he is after his slave, you may depend on 't," said Nelly, alarmed at her fears.

"Dunno; he did not set his eyes on me."

"No matter; he will scour the town to find you. Some ragamuffin has sent word to him that you are here; I'll put the breakfast on the table now," observed Nelly.

"I do n't know 'bout guine to de state of freedom agin. I hates missus Brown; she scolds and frets all the time," remarked the fugitive, unwilling to take the trip.

"Oh! you need n't go to Saint Davids. La sakes! plenty o' places to stop at. There, hurry Tom! you have no time to spare; I'll pack up your things," added Nelly.

"Spare yourself the trouble, Nelly; I must think of it."

"Why, would you think it, Mr. Easy! Tom's master is in search of him, and is actually in this city, and he hesitates to go across the river!" said Nelly to her neighbor, who then happened in. The intelligence alarmed him almost as much as it did her.

"Foolish fellow! by all means go—lose not a moment," said Mr. Easy.

"I had rather 'connoiter a little. Who knows but dat ole Pompey, or some o' de oders, may be with him. No, no; he won't know whar I am. I'll keep watch, an' if I seed um coming, dis nigger will hide under the bed, up in the garret," replied the fugitive, still unwilling to go to Canada.

"What a dunce! Why, man, I would n't give a pin for your chance to escape, if constable —— takes the field. Talk of hiding under the bed! why, that officer is the greatest setter in the whole country—he's notorious," replied Mr. Easy, vexed at Tom's stubbornness.

"Yes, yes; and that's the first—the very first place—he would go to look for you. Come, if you know what's best for you, you will take our advice," said Nelly.

"Oh! it is lonesome over thar," replied the fugitive.

"Pshaw! we will come over and see you; won't we, Mr. Easy?"

"I think likely," he replied, with some hesitation.

"I will, at any rate," added Nelly.

"If I was sure that I can not hear from Dinah, if I stay'd," said the fugitive, in an undertone, to himself.

"What is it you remark?" inquired the washer-woman.

"If I was certain that he went to the hotel, I think it would be best to go. I must think," he replied.

"Well, Mr. Easy, s'pose you loiter about, and see what you can learn. If Tom is determined to stay in the city, we must keep him snug," observed Nelly.

"Very good; Tom can describe his master to me, as well as he can, and I'll take a look," replied Mr. Easy.

He received a pretty full description of the person of young Mr. Erskine, and walked up to Main street, believing he should be able to recognize the gentleman, if he should be fortunate enough to see him. In the meantime, the fugitive remained with the washer-woman.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AMERICAN HOTEL.

Mary, the planter's daughter, had frequently asked her father to take a trip to the Falls of Niagara. She importuned him so much, that finally he consented to come North. Frederick, his son, desired to accompany them; and the father, son, and daughter, taking with them Pompey and Dinah, composed the party.

Instead of going by the seaboard, they took the National Road to the Ohio river, and thence to Cincinnati. Mr. Erskine had not traveled much — never having gone beyond the limits of his native commonwealth, excepting upon a few occasions, and then only for a short distance. He was pleased to make as wide a circuit as he conveniently could, for the mutual gratification of himself and children. From Cincinnati, he pursued the most *direct* route to the Lakes, embarking at Sandusky upon the steamboat bound for the city of Buffalo.

Tom was right in his conjecture as to Frederick, for the party arrived that morning at the latter-named city, and engaged apartments at the American Hotel.

Mary desired to take some female domestic; and Dinah teased so hard, that she concluded to take her in place of Philisee. It seemed that Mr. Gravity, subsequent to his return from Swamp Creek, learned that he was mistaken in his supposition that Uncle Tom was buried in the field, the grave which he saw finally turning out to be that of another negro, who departed this life after a lingering and painful illness. The boy had been told of the accident on the turn-pike, and, as is frequently the case, surmised the rest of his information. It was, therefore, generally believed on the plantation that Uncle Tom had escaped alive.

Dinah loved her husband dearly; and when she heard that her young missis thought of visiting the North, she begged the privilege of attending her. Philisee did not object, although she knew she was the favorite, and could go if she pleased. But she pitied Dinah, who, if she went, perhaps might have the pleasure of seeing her husband.

Aboard of the boat on the lake, Dinah kept straining her eyes, whenever she was outside of the saloon, to see Canada. The chambermaid assured her the pleasure of beholding that country in the morning, and it was not daybreak when the devoted wife was again upon the deck. She had no desire to sleep, and all her thoughts were centered upon her own dear Tom.

The moon had gone down, and it was too dark to see objects afar with distinctness. She wished the boat would move faster over the water. Presently, she thought she caught a faint glimpse of the land far

away in the distance. She almost held her breath in ecstasy. She set her eyes upon the object; but in a few minutes it was too dim to be seen. The darkness increased, and she went below again with a saddened heart. The boat kept on its course; and when the day began to dawn, the lighthouse upon Buffalo pier was in plain sight. Dinah, as she sat in the lower saloon, overheard one of the passengers remark, "there is old fort Erie," and without knowing what place was meant rushed out the door.

"There is Canada; you can have a good view of it. We are now going into the creek," said the chambermaid.

Dinah was satisfied; she had seen the land of freedom; and went to the stateroom above, to wait upon Mary.

Pompey's curiosity to see the land about which he had heard so much, was also excited; and he did not fail to give it his respectful attention. He did not care to talk about it, however, in the presence of Mr. Erskine,—neither did Dinah; both kept their thoughts to themselves. After breakfast, Frederick missed his cane, and directed Pompey to return to the boat and get it. Dinah asked Mary's consent to go with him to the boat, which was readily given.

"Pompey, I want to tell you so bad, how I see whar Tommy is," said Dinah, as they were going down the stairs of the hotel.

"Speak um," said he, in an undertone.

"Jist afore we got off, I looked way 'cross the sea; I'll show you when we git down dar, I will."

"Dinah, did you saw how green it is ober dar?"

"Dunno, Pompey; I s'pects not. Wha'—wha' you mean?" she asked earnestly.

"Why, Dinah, you did n't see how green it look'd! Why, you war n't half so 'serving as dis nigger; an' he hab no husband ober dar—ha! haw! haw!"

"Pompey, you 're cruel to make light," she plaintively answered.

"Why, Dinah, dis nigger would n't injure your feelin's—only a little sport; dat 's all. I feel like fun. Let um go, though. Wha'! what a spankin' big nigger goes on t'other side o' road! I would like to know who he belongs to. Jehu, jehimmini! only jist look at dat ole fellar! why, he can hardly walk! by golly, he gibbs um up! Dar, he 's guine to nap it on de road, as sure as we live—poor fellar!" exclaimed Pompey, as he beheld Jim Hard lying down on the sidewalk, below the canal bridge on Commercial street, after a night's debauch.

"Poor fellar!" echoed Dinah.

"He 's enjoying freedom here; it 's not necessary for him to go to Canada," said Pompey.

"Free, I s'pects," said Dinah.

"Dat ole nigger bought his freedom! He could n't hoe a peck of corn in a week," said Pompey, turning up his nose.

They went aboard of the boat, and found Frederick's cane in the stateroom.

"Pompey, come you now wid me, an' I 'll show you where I stood when I first cast these eyes across de sea," said Dinah, as he was turning to go down the gangway.

"Berry good," replied Pompey; and she conducted him to the stern of the boat, on the lower deck.

"Right here, Pompey; an' how I felt! I wonder if Tommy is ober dar?" she said; and began to cry.

"Pshaw! Dunno; don't act foolish, Dinah, or I shall cry myself. Think no more on 't. Perhaps you will seed him afore massa goes home. Come — come along, Dinah; don't stand dare idle. Young massa wants his cane. Come along; you hinder me," said Pompey, rather harshly, from impatience.

Dinah complied reluctantly with his request.

"Only jist look at dat ole fellar. Why, see the flies! Pooh! I can't bear de sight," exclaimed Pompey, as they again passed by Hard, still lying on the sidewalk, near an empty sugar hogshead.

They walked leisurely up the sidewalk to the hotel. Pompey admired the buildings, stores, shops, and carriages, and was constantly uttering his praise. Dinah admired them too, as they pleased her fancy when immediately before her eyes. But she had no remarks to make. Her heart was elsewhere.

He delivered the cane to his young master

"We shall stop and look at this town for a day or two. Take that, and supply yourself with nick-nacks, Pompey," said Frederick, handing the slave a bright American half dollar.

"Thank 'e, massa," said Pompey, making a very low bow.

He ran to find Dinah, for he wanted her to help him spend the money. Mary overheard what he said.

"Dinah, there's the mate to it," said she, tossing a

similar piece of money into her lap, as she sat by the window, looking down upon the street.

"Thankee, missis Mary," replied Dinah, at the same time rising and making a curtsy.

Pompey and Dinah, in the course of the forenoon, took another stroll.

"I wonder whar' Tom is, an' what he is doin'?" said Dinah.

"I wonder whar' mass'r Bates am?" said Pompey.

"Pompey, you take 'way half my 'joyment, talkin' so."

"Not at all, Dinah. I neber thinks of one widout de oder; dat 's all."

They stopped at a confectioner's, and Pompey bought some candies for Dinah and himself. A negro woman came into the store whilst they were there. Pompey felt so comfortable, and joked so freely with Dinah, that the woman did not feel any restraint in speaking to them, especially as she had an object in view.

"We see a good many of you southern people here in the hot weather. You are traveling with your mistress, I suppose," she said to Dinah.

"Yis; missis Mary war good 'nough to take me wid her on de journey," replied Dinah.

"Going to the Falls, I expects."

"Yis; we stop dar afore we go home to Virginny, I s'pose," replied Dinah.

"Great curiosity," remarked the woman; and left the store. Pompey and Dinah soon supplied themselves with what they wanted, and sauntered along the sidewalk, eating their candies, until they reached again the hotel.

The planter and his children had gone out to ride, and view the town. They admired its location, and the beautiful and cleanly streets. The numerous buildings that were being erected, and the many vessels for the lake, and boats for the canals, that were being built, indicated enterprise and prosperity. Mr. Erskine thought the hotel surpassed any he had ever seen, so elegant was the structure itself, and so admirable were all the interior appointments and arrangements. They passed the day agreeably, and in the evening visited the theatre. Mr. —, the great tragedian, appeared upon the boards, and enacted the humpback tyrant of England, amid the loud applause of the audience, and to their own great gratification. They returned to their lodgings, delighted with the entertainment, and concluded to prolong their stay at Buffalo at least another day.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FREE NEGRO.

In the meantime, whilst the planter and his family, the servants included, were enjoying themselves as thousands of other travelers will continue to do, we have no doubt, who may chance to stop for a day or two in that delightful metropolis, Mr. Easy was making heavy draughts upon his wit, to learn whether Tom's master was actually in the city. He went to the several public houses, and scanned critically the various strangers whom he happened to see. He lingered about the American hotel until near noon. He saw many gentlemen and ladies whom he took to be Southerners; but none corresponded with the description given him, and he concluded that Frederick had proceeded directly from the boat to the cars—and so he reported to the fugitive.

"Tom, you must fly to Canada suddenly!" said Nelly, almost out of breath, as she came running into the house on Vine street.

"I hab de start of you; Mr. Easy jist told me he was gone," replied Tom, perfectly calm.

“Mr. Easy is not sharp ; I tell you, he is here ! your very master ! You have not a minute to spare ! I have seen that ——” Nelly here hesitated, and knit her brow, as if she had something to say, but either could not, or was unwilling to utter it.

Tom stared. Nelly looked downcast.

“Well, proceed —spoke um,” said he, in a gentle tone.

Nelly seemed to be in thought ; Tom began to grow uneasy.

“You aint takin’ sick, or noffin ?” he remarked.

Nelly sat down in the rocking chair, and took off her bonnet.

“Why, Nelly, why ! Do n’t fool dis nigger so ! You war ’bout to say something —out wid um ; you seed me patient,” said Tom.

“Tom, I think I will accompany you ; I likes to go to Saint Davids,” she said.

“Not wid dis nigger, eeny how ! No, no ; gib me de States. Here am de only place to live like freeman.”

“I agree to that ; but such color’d gemmen as yourself are denied the privilege,” replied Nelly.

“I am not guine dar. I tell you, Mr. Easy jist said that massa war out o’ town.”

“It is not so ; I have seen with my own eyes, that ——”

“Who—who ? why do n’t you spoke um ?” inquired Tom, in a louder tone of voice.

“Why, if you must know,” replied Nelly, with a sneer upon her countenance, “I have seen that wench, Dinah !”

"Dinah! my own lubly Dinah?" exclaimed the fugitive, and buried his face in his hands.

"Yes, I have seen her; and I see some one else, too, Tom."

"What dat you say, Nelly?" said he, looking up in surprise.

"I see a colored gemman."

"Who? what his name?" asked Tom.

"She called him Pompey; he did n't look bad."

"It is n't possible!" exclaimed Tom, more in sorrow than anger.

"I say it is a fact; he was buying candy for her."

Tom burst into tears, and cried like a child. Nelly pitied him, and yet was glad to see the information affect him.

"Now, I'm guine to die!" said Tom, sobbing continually.

"I can't help it, Tom; but you shall not kill yourself. The true way is to think no more of it. Fly to Canada, and be safe from bondage. I will come to you, as soon as I can settle up, and we will have a happy home," said Nelly, thinking she had aroused his jealousy sufficiently to bend him to her will, and weaken, if not altogether destroy, his affection for Dinah.

"I must see um, first," he replied.

"See them! why, how can you be so foolhardy? I tell you, your master is on the watch; and it is out of the question for you to do that, without being discovered and caught," said she, rising to attend to a knock at the outer door.

It was Jim Hard, who, having slept his nap out on the sidewalk, and hearing Mr. Easy say that the boot-black was in danger, came to give his aid and advice.

“Well, Tom, in bilboes, eh?” remarked Hard, “haw, haw, haw! you should lead free and easy life, like me, then they would n’t take the trouble to hunt you up. Tom, you are too infernal smart for the times; can’t be helped, though. Come, cheer up; you must show yourself a trump now. Haw, haw, haw!”

“I likes no sich talk, Mr. Hard; my heart feels bad,” said Tom.

“Fiddle de dee! throw your heart away. You must not sit here and brood: if my master was here, I should put for the other side of the river, posthaste.”

“Exactly, Mr. Hard; that’s my counsel, and he will not take it. I am glad to see you so sensible,” said Nelly.

“Of course, I am—never otherwise. Come with me; I’ll pilot you safe, master or no master.”

“I would like to take jist one look of Dinah; den I am ready to go to Saint Davids,” remarked Tom.

“Mr. Hard, that is impossible, and get away safe,” said Nelly, before he had time to reply.

“I do n’t know—I do n’t know, missis Nelly; I guess we can fetch that. Let us see,” said Hard, scratching his head. “Where is she?” he finally asked.

“At hotel—American,” replied Tom.

“Very good; we will try that.”

Tom got up from the chair, and said that he was ready to make the effort.

"Not too fast, Tom; I do n't like daylight for sich a jaunt; we must take the dark for that. We will make our descent this evening," said Hard.

"Yes; and before that time, Tom will be in the hands of constable ——! I almost hear him coming, now," said Nelly.

"Oh! do n't be alarmed about that officer. I have often given him a lead around the corner," said Hard, who always felt perfectly at home when playing "hide and seek" with the police. "Come, missis Nelly, give us some feed, and I will take this gem-man into my custody; and mark you, I'll bring him out safe and sound. He will find me a blood, and no mistake."

"I never did see sich a contrary fellar," said Nelly, vexed at the fugitive's obstinacy, and fearful that old Hard would get them into trouble.

But it was of no use; Tom was inflexibly determined to take a peep at Dinah, and old Hard was too fond of adventure to allow this opportunity to pass by unimproved. She got them something to eat; and shortly after the sun went down, the fugitive and his pilot started out for a cruise.

"Whar—whar you guine, frien' Hard?" asked Tom, as they entered a narrow alley in the rear of the hotel.

"Close, now—not a word," whispered the pilot. "If we should be seen, we would have constable —— arter us, in good earnest."

"I know'd dat voice! it am ——" exclaimed Tom, in as low a tone as his excited feelings would permit him.

"Hist—hist! careful, careful—now; there, hold your walk," said Hard, as they came within hearing of Dinah's voice, talking to Pompey in the window above.

There was no moon, and a thunder-cloud, hovering low over the city, shut out the light of the stars. They took their position under the window, standing close to the wall of the building, and listened.

"I would give eeny thing, if I only could agin see my dear Tom," said Dinah.

"Dar, dar! I know'd Nelly war wrong," whispered Tom.

"Hist! unless you are ready to go back to the street," said Hard.

"Lucinda told dis nigger to be sure an' see um, afore I left de North," said Pompey.

"Mebbe, we shall see him at the Falls. Missis Mary told me, she hoped I might," replied Dinah.

"I wonder how he likes his state of freedom? Heigh, ho! the old boat kept me awake last night. I wish massa home from the theatre," remarked Pompey.

They soon retired from the window, and Tom and old Hard picked their way back to the street.

There was no doubt now, in the fugitive's mind, of the presence of his master in the city. And if he harbored any suspicion of the fidelity of his wife, that was removed by the interview, and he could not bear the thought of never beholding her again. If he could have a chance to talk with her, he believed that he could persuade her to remain at the North, and flee

with him to Canada. How to accomplish this, he did not know. He was afraid to approach his master, and yet he felt as though he would like to take him by the hand. And as for Pompey, how much did he wish to hear him tell over what had transpired since he left the cabin. He hurried back with Hard to the washerwoman. He rehearsed to Nelly what conversation he heard between the two slaves, and insisted that he would not cross the Niagara until he had seen more of his wife, whatever might be the consequences to himself. She again urged him to make his escape good, but to no purpose, and dismissed the subject.

Hard advised him to contrive some way to get possession of his wife. That done, and the fugitive thought his fortune would be better, and himself contented. After canvassing the subject, they concluded the planter did not mistrust that Tom was in Buffalo, and therefore, the fugitive need not continue in such close confinement. If he kept out of the sight of his master, it was all that was necessary.

"And now," said Hard, "will you stand fire, and not run, if we really undertake to run your wife across the river?"

"Yas; depend on 't," replied Tom.

"Not even if she should take it into her head to scream, and faint, and all that?"

"No, no. Do evil that good may come, you know," said the fugitive, with more cheerfulness of manner than he had exhibited for a long time.

"Very good. I will take a look at the subject, and see how the thing can be brought about. Meet

me on the canal bridge, in the morning, and we will talk further. I shall have some ideas to give you, I'll warrant ye. So, good night to you, and don't let me catch you blubbering agin," said Hard; and after suggesting to the washer-woman to let Tom's fears alone, he left the house and went down town, delighted that he had so much work on his hands. It was this kind which suited his fancy, and he would on no account lose the fun in prospect.

After the fugitive got to bed that night, he wondered why it was that Pompey and Dinah did not long to be free, like himself; and much more was he amazed, that his master ventured to take them to Buffalo. He thought more of him than ever before. He must have a confiding heart, and be unconscious that slaves desired to change their condition. Tom thought it would be too bad to decoy Dinah away, and felt half-inclined to abandon the project.

In the morning, he kept his word with Hard, punctually. There was quite a stir in the vicinity of the bridge, it being the hour for the departure of the packet boat eastward. The crowd had pretty much dispersed, before his old friend appeared at the rendezvous.

"Hullo, Nelly, is that you! I heard you was coming, but I did not believe a bit of it," said Hard to the washer-woman, who had just then reached the bridge.

"It is necessary; I take too deep an interest," said she.

"Well, mum is the word—mind that, now. No tales, nor whining," he replied.

"Wha' makes you so late?" asked Tom.

"Cholera morbus."

"Who?"

"The cholera — cholera morbus, I think they call it."

"Oh! sick, Jim?" inquired Nelly.

"No, not myself. Prevalent down here — several dead."

"Dead! Who?"

"Two, I believe. I think two."

"What are their names?" asked Nelly, who had many acquaintances in the lower part of the city.

"The barber on Water street, and fourteen other people."

"Good heavens!"

"Yes, there were ten of them. Their time is up."

"Well, be quick now; talk fast. What you got to say?" said Nelly, who was afraid of the disease, and did not wish to remain in the hot sun any longer than was necessary.

"Seen her, Tom, since?" asked Hard.

"No; I come down the back street."

"I have, though," said Nelly.

"Look amiable — cross — did n't care, eh?"

"She was at the candy store agin," said Nelly.

"You do n't! What a sweet creature — yah! yah! yah!"

"What you mean by dat?" asked Tom, in a voice that showed he resented the remark.

"Do n't vex yourself; it's all right," replied Hard.

"Well, why do n't you tell it? not keep us waiting

here all the morning," said Nelly, growing more impatient.

"Do you know Jake, the cook?" asked Hard.

"Jake! where does he cook?"

"On the steamboat what runs to the other end of the lake."

"O, yes; I am acquainted with the gemman," said Nelly.

"He recollects um."

"Who do you mean — Dinah?"

"Of course; who else we talking about? He says he will stay over and take a hand in; and he is a blood, let me tell you that. He come near killing his overseer, off there somewhere. His master was glad to sell him cheap, and they raised a distribution for him, and he got his freedom — yah! yah! yah!"

"Take me whar' he is? I'd like to talk wid um," said Tom.

"Oh! you can rely on him," remarked Hard.

"He is on the boat, I s'pose," said Nelly.

"Do n't you believe that. He has gone up the creek to look for a little sail craft lying up there. I'm to meet him at noon, below the ship canal," said Hard.

"And then you are to arrange it are you?" asked Nelly.

"Arranged! What you talking for? All settled now; you ought to know this chap better than to s'pect I'd leave things half done. I tell you, it's all settled. The point now is, to have Dinah at the boat," said Hard.

"At noon?" asked Nelly.

"Why not? I had as lief fight in the daytime as in the night. I had rather. Then I can see better where to strike."

"You are not going to fight, are you?" asked Nelly.

"There it comes. I was afeerd you would blubber, if I told you nothing. Fight! of course we are going to fight, if necessary. But no matter for that. Can you do anything? Come, show your hand. You seem to want to take a part in the business. What can you do?" asked Hard.

"I do n't know, Jim, except to look on."

"Shall I tell you what you can do, Nelly?"

"Of course."

"You can fall in with Dinah somewhere, and coax her to the boat. That 's what you can do. Jake and myself will do the rest."

"Yes, yes; so I can; and I'll try it too," said Nelly.

"That 's it. Now, you talk like somebody. Perhaps, she is still in the street. You go and look. And mind you, do n't take no for an answer."

"Yes, Jim, you can rely on me," said Nelly, turning to go off the bridge.

"That 's the way to talk it. Tom, you come with me. Do n't forget, Nelly, the place," said Hard.

"Not a bit. I 'm posted on that," she replied.

It was nearer night than noon, before Jake moored his little sail vessel at the point agreed upon. His companions had waited some time. They were quickly aboard. Jake was armed with a bowie knife, ready for any assault; and he looked as though he would use

it with a will, if necessary. He wore a heavy neck-cloth, loosely tied, and extending half-way down the front of his body; which he said could be used as a gag, if the woman made any outcry. Some sailor noticing the craft, inquired where she was bound, and Jake remarked that they were going down the river to fish. The answer undoubtedly was satisfactory; for he had taken the precaution to get a couple of poles and fish lines, which lay in full sight. Hard informed him that Nelly had undertaken the job of persuading the woman to come down to the boat; and all they had to do, in the meantime, was to wait in patience. An hour or so elapsed, and she did not make her appearance. Jake suggested that Hard should go ashore and take a look. To this proposition the latter made no objection, as he had not tasted a drop of liquor for at least three hours; and left his friend Tom in charge of the free negro.

THE FREE NEGRO.



CHAPTER XXX.

COURAGE, GRATITUDE, AND CONTENTMENT.

Nelly did not find Dinah at the confectioners; neither could she get a sight of her in the street. She lingered on the sidewalk opposite the hotel, so long as she deemed it prudent, and then went home. It would be uncharitable to say she did not regret her inability to execute the errand; but, however that may have been, she did not disguise to Mr. Easy, whom she met on the way, her hope that the sailors, in any event, would take the fugitive to Canada.

Unwilling to be censured for not making every reasonable effort, after dinner Nelly sallied out again. It so happened, that she saw Dinah going into a public garden, near the hotel, and as she approached the door, she halted for the slave to come out. It was not long before the latter made her appearance, with her hands full of oranges.

"You have bought so many, I guess you are from the South," said Nelly, with a half-smile and pointing to the fruit.

"No whar else, I'm thinking," replied the slave, and evincing no disposition to stop.

"How far are you traveling?" asked Nelly.

"Guine to de Falls," she replied.

"Is your name Dinah?" again asked Nelly.

The slave had almost passed the washer-woman, but upon hearing the last question, she suddenly looked around, and said, with surprise,

"Whar did you hear that?"

"Oh! nothing; only I thought I would make bold to put the question. No offence, I hope?" said Nelly.

"Yes, my name am Dinah."

"I thought as much; if I could get a chance, I would tell you some good news," said Nelly.

Dinah did not know what to make of the stranger.

"Who are you?" she inquired, earnestly.

"Oh! my name is Nelly; I lives in this town."

"I neber seed you, afore," remarked Dinah, and turned her head. "I hab no time to talk — missus is waitin'," she added.

"Would you like to see Tom?" asked Nelly in a low voice.

"Who? My Tom, d 'ye say?"

"Yes, he that run away from his master several years ago."

"Oh! bless you, yes! but dat 's out o' de question," replied the slave, and started on.

"I can show him to you, if you will go with me," said Nelly, walking the same way.

"When? whar?"

"Now, if you says so — eeny time; he is not far off."

Dinah did not know what to say or do. She thought a moment.

"I wish to hear you talk more ; but I 'm afeerd missis will not like it, if I stop longer, she is waitin' for me," said Dinah.

"No matter ; you come out to the street, back of the hotel, and I will meet you there," said Nelly.

"Da 's it ; I 'll be thar in a jiff," said Dinah, and at once crossed the street, her heart throbbing with joy.

Nelly lost no time in getting into Pearl street. She found Dinah in an alley conducting to it from the back door of the hotel, and invited her to walk down the street.

"We will not stand here, we may be observed ; we will talk as we go," said the washer-woman, and Dinah very willingly complied with the request.

"Whar am 'Tommy?" she asked, as they were walking along.

"Not far off ; you must promise not to tell your missis," said Dinah.

"No, no ; I does no sich thing," she replied.

"Nor your master ; nor no one," said Dinah.

"Nobody ; I shall not betray him," she declared.

"Very good. I am taking you to him now ; so, hurry your steps, and you will see him the sooner," said Nelly, as they reached Erie street, which lead to the spot where the sail vessel was anchored.

"Yes, I 'll keep up. The faster we go, the better to my feelin's," said the slave. "How far is it?" she asked.

"Do you see the creek, yonder?"

"O yes ; in plain sight," replied Dinah.

"He is aboard of a vessel, there, I s'pose; he promised to be," said the washer-woman, almost out of breath, from walking so rapidly. The slave thought too much about seeing her husband to mind the fatigue; indeed, the faster she walked, the greater was her desire to increase the speed.

"Oh, bless me! how glad I am, to think I'm guine to see him," said Dinah.

"You will not wish to leave him, I guess," remarked Nelly.

"No, no; that you may depend on," said Dinah.

"There, I know'd it would be so; I told Jim Hard there was no danger of your backing out. Of course, you would go to Canada with him," said Nelly, as they reached the bridge which crossed a ship-canal.

"What's dat? d'ye say go to Canada?" said Dinah, and stopped.

"Why, certainly; your husband is in the boat now, waiting to take you to the other side of the river," said Nelly.

"No, no; I'm not guine to his state of freedom," said Dinah, stretching up her neck, to get a glimpse of him, if possible.

"Why, how you talk, woman! you will not go and live with your own dear husband? Yes, you will, though; come along—we shall soon be aboard," said Nelly.

The slave did not move, or speak; but the tears fell in streams from her eyes. The washer-woman gazed upon her with the most profound astonishment. This

was a new freak in human nature. The idea that the slave would not embrace her freedom, when it was within her grasp! and, above all, unwilling to go and share it with her husband! Such conduct was a perfect enigma—it was unnatural. She began to think that the slave did not care for Tom.

“You are willing to abandon poor Tom then, are you? You’re a miserable creature, that’s what you be; unwilling to live with your husband! Oh! I see how it is; you have no affection for him! it’s all pretence, this desire to look at him. You will go, I s’pose, and inform your master what I have told you. If you do, you had n’t better stay in this town long—that I can tell you, any how,” said Nelly, vexed with the slave.

“Are you married?” asked Dinah, after a moment or two.

“Yes; but my husband—bless his good heart! is long since dead.”

“Have you children?” again asked Dinah.

“To be sure I have—two; and I love them dearly. Why do you ask the question?” inquired Nelly.

“Which would you ’bandon, if boun’ to choose?”

It was Nelly’s turn now to make no answer.

“What do you say?” asked Dinah.

“A hard question; excuse me,” said Nelly.

“Dat’s my situation.”

“Ah! yes, I remember; Tom told me he had children at the South. Well, you can go and see him; perhaps, he will not force you to go,” remarked Nelly.

"No, no; I stirs not a step! My heart breaks to see him: I will stay here till you go an' ax him to come," said Dinah.

The washer-woman perceived that was the only alternative, and left the slave on the bridge, whilst she went to report to Tom. She was unable to find him; Jake's delay in coming down the creek with the boat was the reason. Nelly was at a loss to understand why the rescuers were not at the point designated; and after looking around unsuccessfully to find them, she returned to Dinah.

"They are gone; I suspect the project is abandoned," said Nelly.

"I am sorry—very sorry. Do n't you s'pose I shall be able to see my Tommy, good woman?" asked Dinah.

"When do you leave town?"

"Missis Mary says, to-morrow."

"Could you get out of the hotel a night?"

"I could try um," said the slave.

"Tom, to tell you the whole truth, boards with me; he was brought to my house, sick," said Nelly.

"Sick! has the poor man been sick?" earnestly asked Dinah.

"I guess you would have thought so, if you had seen him; he lay next to death's door, for weeks."

"When was this?" asked Dinah.

"Last winter; he was frozen in the snow," said Nelly.

Dinah gave a shudder.

"I told him dat, the night he left the cabin; but he

war so headstrong, it made no difference wid his feel-ins'," said she.

"He is well, now. I nursed him night and day ; he had all my attention. I like him. He is a well disposed man — much self-will, though : I do n't blame him for that — it 's nat'ral," said Nelly.

"How grateful I feel to you ; I'll ax missis Mary for a present," said Dinah.

"Why, woman, you must not do that ! Tom will be discovered at once ! No ; do n't you do that for the world ! mind, now," exclaimed Dinah, almost sorry that she mentioned Tom's illness.

"Sure enough ; but if I can git anything for you, I will, and hand it to you to-night, in de alley. An' if you find Tommy, bring him with you," said Dinah.

"Yes ; we will consider that the arrangement," said Nelly.

They had reached Pearl street on their return, and the washer-woman hastened to her house, to tell the fugitive what she had done, if he chanced to be at home.

Dinah had been gone from the hotel for more than an hour. Her absence was not noticed by the planter or his children. But not so with Pompey ; he missed her ; and when she came in, was anxious to know where she had strayed. She made light of his questions, and went to Mary's room, to see if she was wanted.

Mary and her brother were discussing the question of freedom, and the relative condition of happiness of the bond and the free. And the former, with the

view of quizzing the honest, faithful, good hearted slave, asked her how she would like to be her own mistress.

"La sakes! missis Mary, I would n't be free, for noffin," she said.

"Tut, tut, Dinah! now be honest for once," said Mary, pleasantly.

"I told you de truth already," affirmed the slave.

"What! Do you pretend to say that you want us to take you home to Oakland again?" asked Mary — frivolously, it is true.

"Yes, missis; I would n't stay here an' freeze — I'll warrant. No, no; not I," said Dinah.

"Very good. See if there is any water in the pitcher, Dinah."

"All gone, missis."

"Pull the bell, Dinah; I am very thirsty."

"Yes, missis."

"I do n't see, Dinah, but that we must keep you, then."

"I hope so, missis."

"Well, if you are going to return, Dinah, look around, and improve your time; see all you can. We go down to Niagara in the morning train," said Mary.

"It is amusing to hear Pompey and Dinah make their remarks about the blacks they see in the street," remarked Frederick, after Dinah went out.

"I really do not believe there is one in fifty half as well cared for as our slaves; I'm sure I have not seen any that began to look as tidy or comfortable as our

Dinah. No wonder that she dislikes the idea of remaining here," said Mary.

Pompey was watching for Dinah at the head of the first flight of stairs. He was determined she should not run out of the hotel again, without his knowing it. And although Mary's room was in the third story, the door to it was in full view. This hotel, reader, was indeed *sui generis*—to borrow a homely phrase from the classics—in America. Its pattern, it is said, can be seen in Marseilles, France. It was—pshaw! we will not stop to describe its remarkably easy flights of stairs, one exactly above the other, to an altitude of one hundred and fifty feet; its wide and spacious halls; its high, airy, and commodious rooms; its multitude of parlors, both public and private, when every nook and corner is familiar to—we know not how many, who have tarried for a day or week in the Venice of the western world! We will pass it over, and come back to the simple narrative.

Pompey saw Dinah when she came out of Mary's room, and he kept his eyes upon her, as she brushed along the balustrade, and descended the stairs.

"Whar' you guine now, Miss Dinah?" he asked.

"How berry particular you am, Pompey," she said.

"Oh! I ax your pardon, if you are ashamed of dis nigger. I'll not intrude," remarked Pompey, turning his back, and whisking down stairs.

"Pompey, you ar n't offended, I hopes; I war only talkin'," she said, as they walked to the rear of the building, on the first floor. "I likes your company," she added.

"Berry good; dat's all, Dinah. I'm at your service," he said.

"I've got something to mention to you, Pompey."

"Spoke um, Dinah—spoke um," said he.

"What do you s'pose I have heard, Pompey?"

"Dunno—dunno."

"You wo n't believe me, if I tell you."

"Try um—try um."

"I hav n't seed my Tommy."

"I s'pects not. Who said you had?"

"Pompey, you are berry obstinate."

"Whar' did you go, Dinah? Tell me that, and then I'll be perlite an' sociable," said Pompey.

"Why ax sich foolish question? I told you I walk'd down street; dat's all, Pompey," said Dinah.

"There it is; now you talk um; dat's de way. Dis nigger am not particular; he only wants to know—not particular."

"Missis says enjoy myself. I'm guine to walk agin," said Dinah.

"Am guine, too. What war' you 'bout to say?"

"Noffin, Pompey."

"What 'bout Uncle Tom?"

"Noffin."

"Now, *you* ar' obstinate, Dinah. You hab seen him; I know'd you have. Own up, now."

"Oh! no, no! but I expect to see him with my own eyes; an' to-night, too," replied Dinah.

"To-night!"

"Yes, dis berry night!"

"Whar'—whar', Dinah?"

"In the street."

"Ah, ha! you guine to run off? Now I know'd it."

"He wants me to go to Canada; but I shall not do so. I likes massa an' missis Mary too well," she replied, with apparent sincerity.

"To make sure, dis nigger goes wid you."

"Will you, Pompey?"

"Certainly. I likes to look at de ole fellar."

"Dat's right. I'll call to you when it's time," said she.

"I know'd you would. But, you must n't think of running off; I'll go agin dat," replied Pompey.

"I tell you, I'm not guine to think of it; do n't mention um agin," said Dinah, vexed to be suspected.

After dusk, Dinah contrived to get into the alley in the rear of the hotel, without the knowledge of Pompey. Nelly met her there, as she promised; but Tom did not accompany her. She had not seen him since the interview with Dinah, in the afternoon. Her presence, however, was no less the welcome to the slave.

"Take that for your pains," said Dinah, handing to the washer-woman a few pennies.

"Thank 'e, good woman," replied Nelly, "you ought to be free."

"Do n't speak dat," she answered; "my money comes from missis Mary. An' please give this to Tommy," she added, handing to the washerwoman a half-dollar.

"By all means, I will; how he will be gratified!" she said.

“Tell him it am from his dear Dinah, and how sorry she is, not to see him,” said the slave.

“Yes, yes; that I will,” answered the washer-woman.

“Say to him, that our children are all well, and how often they ask for him,” said the slave.

“Oh! how he will be affected!” said the washer-woman.

“Tell him of his ole hickory cane, with Emily’s face cut into the head; and how it stands in the corner under the cupboard, jist as it did the night he left the cabin,” enjoined the slave.

“Everything you want me to say,” replied the washer-woman.

“An’ say to him, how much we want him to come back an’ sit under the veranda,” said the slave.

“Yes.”

“Tell him all this, an’ my ole heart will neber forget you — neber!” reiterated Dinah.

“All — all shall be told him,” replied the washer-woman; and they separated.

Dinah was disappointed not to see her husband; but she felt some comfort to have it in her power to make him a present, however humble it might be, and to be near enough to him to send these simple messages.

CHAPTER XXXI.

NIAGARA FALLS — CLIFTON HOUSE — CANADA.

We stated, a few pages back, that Hard started from the little sail-boat in the creek, to see if he could find Nelly. He went to the house on Vine street, and not finding her in, concluded to go over the way, and call on Mr. Easy. He did not find this gentleman in, either. Instead of going back to the washer-woman's domicil, and there remaining until she returned, he made his way back to the creek. He loitered at a place where the occupant sold grog for a penny or two a drink, and so long a while that it was time for the occupants of the neighboring buildings to close up for the night, before he thought of leaving.

Jake, the free negro, grew tired of waiting, and wondered why neither Hard nor Nelly reported themselves. He thought it was an imposition, and vented his spleen upon Tom. The fugitive, of course, was ignorant of the trouble, and endeavored to excuse his ignorance; but to no purpose. Jake imagined that it was a contrived plan, to throw the entire responsibility

of the enterprise upon his shoulders. It would n't do not to make some use of the vessel, for he would be the laughing-stock of the crew on the steamboat. Besides, for the past three hours, he had repeatedly said to the sailors and boys, he was going down the river, to fish.

"Tom," said he, "did you ever use the fish-pole?"

"O yes; alwars drop the sinkers, when it rains, afore I come North," he replied.

"Well, we will try our hand to-night, at the Rock; I guess they may bite some."

"Guine fishing in earnest, Jake?"

"Yes; d'ye spose I'm to have all this trouble for nothing?"

"An' leave Dinah?" asked the fugitive.

"Leave her? we hain't got her, yit."

"Oh! she will trot along on de beach in a minute; do n't be in a hurry, I hate to go so."

"No, sir."

"Guine now, capt'in?"

"To be sure; do you know 'nough to steer?"

"Not sich big vessel as this," answered Tom, surprised that the free negro should imagine he could.

"Big vessel? why, man, I can guide it with one hand."

"Dunno," said the fugitive, shaking his head.

"Wall, I know; do you take me for a child?"

"She will go on to the rock, I 'm atcerd; less wait a little longer."

"I 'm off."

"An' leave friend Hard?" inquired the fugitive, anxiously.

"Ha! haw! haw! leave Hard? He has left himself, already, in some rum-hole, I'll bet."

"Reckon not, capt'in."

"Reckon not! why, you do n't know that old rip as well as I do. He never shuts his mouth, as long as the bung-hole runs: he is laid up for the night, I'll bet."

"He thinks too much of Dinah," said the fugitive.

"What a fool you be! Did he ebber see the woman?"

"Reckon not."

"And you s'pose he cares a fig for her?"

"Why, yes, capt'in. He would not miss the chance of helpin', for any thing."

"Exactly; and d'ye want to know the cause?"

"Yes, capt'in."

"Kase he has nothin' to do; and, if the truth was known, he expects liquor aboard. Did you see how ready he was to go and look for the washer-woman?" asked Jake.

"Yes; an' 'kase he ar' for freedom—dat's de reason."

"Fudge! he was dry; I know'd it, but I did n't know but he might light upon her, somewhere, and so help along. We have waited, and we may wait till morning, and that's all the good it will do. We shall see no Dinah, nor any one else of the crew," said the free negro.

"Dat's him coming now—thar on the dock; do n't you see, capt'in?" said the fugitive, trying to delay.

"Over where? I see most everybody but that old rip. No, no; we shall not see him again to-night, so, if you do n't know 'nough to hold the rudder, be ballast, and get yourself into the bottom, and I will do the rest: we are off, the first breeze—do you hear that?" said the free negro, with as much pomposity as if he trod the quarter deck of a brig.

The fugitive evinced the same servility as if he had been on board of a man-of-war. He stood in as much awe of Jake, as if he had been a commodore, with the broad pennant flying in the breeze.

"I'll go an' find my friend Hard," answered the fugitive

"No you do n't though. You will go and help find fish. You find the ole rip! Why, he would lead you till next week, for there is no telling what covey he is snug with now." said the free negro.

"I reckon," said the fugitive, "it's you dat do 'nt know'd um. He—I heard him say so wid his own lips—thinks more of me an' my Dinah, than all."

"All what?"

"All de color'd folks in dis town."

"Fiddle-de-dee."

"I know'd what I talk 'bout, capt'in."

"Why, man, he steals—I guess, robs—when good chance offers. He is most notorious. Too lazy to work. If he had n't been, he would never run away from Tennessee," said the free negro.

Tom thought that was a personal reflection; and if he had not been afraid of the free negro, would have demonstrated it. As it was, he shrugged his shoulders,

and held his tongue. The captain, as he called him, seated himself in the stern of the boat, preparatory to leaving the anchorage.

“Now, see if you can hoist the sail,” said he.

The fugitive was as ignorant as the man o’ the woods, how to go to work to execute the order. He attempted to raise it two or three times, but without success.

“Dunno, capt’in. Too big craft for dis nigger,” he replied.

“Pull on the rope. She will come to the mast,” said the free negro, with a harsh, commanding voice.

Tom made an effort, but was unsuccessful. He gave it up.

“Dunno, captin’. Do n’t fetch um,” said he.

“What a fool! Do n’t know ’nough to raise even a sail. Try um agin, you ninny!” said the free negro.

Tom made another effort, and was more successful, and they set sail directly across the mouth of the river, and landed at Fort Erie.

“Step ashore,” said the free negro, “and haul her on the sand, and make her fast. We will try our luck with the line here.”

“Whar we cum to, captin’?” asked Tom.

“You do n’t know, do you? Do n’t it look like Canady, you fool?”

Tom looked around, after he stepped upon the beach, but as this was his first visit to that particular spot, he could not tell whether he was in the land of freedom or not.

“Dunno, captin’. Do n’t look much like Saint Davids,” said the fugitive.

"Pshaw! Is that the only place in this country?"

"What do you call it?"

"Fort Erie. The place where they fought in the war. Do n't you see the stone over there?"

"S'pect not."

"Look sharp."

"Can't catch um, capt'in; too dark."

"Getting blind, hey?" said the free negro, sneeringly.

"In the night time, when there is no moon, capt'in. An't you puzzled, also?" asked Tom, going up to the road to get a nearer view of the Fort.

"Never; eye-sight as good in the dark as in the light."

"Oh, I sees a wall up in de field. Dat 's um, d' ye say?"

"Nothing else; that's the place where we fought the British at the point of the bayonet. How do you like the looks of it?" asked the free negro, at the same time shoving the prow of the boat off the sand.

"Golly, dis nigger would lay close under de wall, when they shot their guns, you 'd better believe."

"Not stand up and fight like soldier! Coward! Well, that is the way with most folks. S'pose you go and see how it would seem to lay there now; good place to lodge," said the free negro, and hoisted the sail again.

Tom heard it flutter, and run down from the road to the beach. The vessel had left shore, and was slowly getting under motion; it was already in deep water.

"Hullo, capt'in, you ar n't guine to leave me, are

you?" yelled Tom, as loud as he could make his voice ring.

"Why not, you booby? You are home, now, and be content to stay there—ha! haw! haw!" roared the free negro.

"For Lor'sake! stop, an' let me get aboard! I shall starve and die, if I am left in dis country. Stop—do stop!" again screamed the fugitive. But it was no use. A stiff breeze sprung up, and the little clipper scud swiftly before it, and run into Buffalo creek ere the fugitive hardly had time to consider what to do.

"There, I think I shall know it, when I goes fishing with sich critters agin," said the free negro to himself, as he sailed up the creek, to take the vessel to its owner.

"Catch much, Jake?" asked an inquisitive associate, as he landed on the dock.

"No; did n't bite," answered the free negro, gruffly.

"Back too soon; should hung out longer. How far did you go—Squaw Island?"

"Do n't be so inquisitive. Do n't you believe me? You seed I have nothin'. Mind your business. I tell you the fish, for some reason, would not bite. So there, be quiet with your nonsense," answered the free negro, more gruffly than before; and walked as fast as he could, to get out of the way.

"How mighty snarly and cross you be, Jake! I know'd you would n't catch nothing, when I see you go by the lighthouse."

"Was you standing there?"

"Yes I was; jist arter dinner. I see you go down

to the Rock along Sandytown. I knew then, that Jim Hard would get drunk, and joggle the boat so that the fish would n't bite—I know'd it. If you had invited me, you would have hit it square on the head. Live and learn, though, Jake; that 's the way."

"Well, if you aint the most knowing darkey I have seen to-day, I would n't say so. Never mind, I 'll take you the next time I lay over a trip," remarked the free negro, and hastened along to find lodgings.

Tom was at a loss what course to pursue. He was alone, in a strange land, and did not know to whom he could go for assistance. He was penniless, and had not eaten anything since noon. He mused a a moment or two, and went back to the road. He saw a light some distance ahead, and directed his steps thither. It proceeded from a small grocery. The door was open and he walked in. In the rear part of the room, he noticed a sort of a bar with eatables and drinkables. He stepped up to it, and begged for a cracker or twist of cake. The person who tended the place roughly declined to accommodate him, and intimated that, if he knew what was good for himself, he had better be off. Tom told him his situation, and how he happened to be set down there at that time of night. The bar-tender affected not to believe his story, and ordered the fugitive to leave. Tom reiterated his destitute condition, and again begged for a bit of bread to quiet his stomach. But his importunity was unavailing, and the bar-tender, not content with simply ordering the fugitive peremptorily out of doors, took

hold of his shirt collar and assisted him along to the door.

"There," said he, shoving the fugitive out of the door, "now take the road and leave; and do n't you let me see you in these parts agin."

Tom hesitated, for he really did not know which way to go. He felt more like giving up, and if he must starve, so be it. The bar-tender perceived that he did not evince much disposition to move off, and he stepped out of the grocery into the road, and kicked and pushed him.

"You go from here, old chap," said he, "I can tell you; so, there's no use of feigning hunger or drunkenness. You know what you are about. This is the last place for you to come for plunder; you can't steal here, you'd better believe. And if you do n't make yourself scarce right off, I will have you taken up on suspicion. Now, mind your points, you old codger—do you hear?"

Tom made some slight resistance to this indignity, which aroused the ire of the bar-tender.

"You won't move, hey? I'll see if you don't," said he, and stepped back into the grocery and got a whip with a raw, heavy lash, and plied it hard on the fugitive's body.

Tom quailed, begged for mercy, and endeavored to get out of its reach. The bar-tender followed, and kept plying the lash harder and faster.

"I'll make your old back smoke, you poacher, you! I will cut the marks so that you will remember this place for some time," said he.

“Oh! mass’r, oh! you cenyumost hit my heart! Let me go, mass’r, I beg! I beg you! Oh! do stop!” exclaimed the fugitive, his red flannel shirt proving insufficient to staunch the blood now fast trickling down the back even to his feet, and each repeated blow tearing the wound of the previous one, until he felt as if his back was raw with the deep cuts of the whip-lash.

“Very well. Move along, and I will stand still; and if you keep moving, the sooner will you be beyond the reach of my lash,” said the bar-tender, keeping his word.

Tom gladly accepted the proposition, and soon ceased to feel these inhuman blows. He felt that he had not amended his condition by going into the grocery. Now, not only hunger gnawed at his stomach, but the sensitive, smarting pains of his wounds almost distracted him. He did not dare to stop and sit down, until he had gone over the road some distance, fearing that the bar tender would again overtake him. Finally he became so much exhausted, that he ventured to stop. It was on the brink of a ravine, and he washed off the blood from his hands, bathed his body in the water, and in a short time appeared to forget his misery. He awoke by daybreak, and was too feverish to be hungry. He felt more like crawling than walking. His back pained him, for the wounds of the lash were much inflamed. He looked around, and his mind was so much bewildered that he had no distinct recollection of how he happened to be there. After much exertion, he made out to ascend a small hill in the road; and the fresh morning breeze fanned his temples

and cooled his brain. He began to be more sane, and remembered the scene at the grocery. He was near the bank of the river, and could plainly discern objects upon the other side of it. He was conscious that he traveled that road before, when he went from Saint Davids to Buffalo. In fact, he was a short distance below Waterloo. Not far ahead, there was a farmhouse, and he thought he would make an effort to reach it. He did so; and as he entered the yard, the owner met him.

"What do you want?" said he, perceiving that the negro's pantaloons were stained with blood.

"Rest, an' somethin' to eat, mass'r," replied the fugitive.

"You are a hard character, I'm afraid," said the farmer.

"Lor' bless you! mass'r, no. Take me in, please mass'r?"

"But where do you come from? and what means that blood?" said the farmer, pointing to the pantaloons.

Tom briefly explained, and the farmer consented to let him walk around to the kitchen.

"Mrs. Sharp, here is a colored person in need," said the farmer to his wife.

"Bless me! you look as though you come from a slaughter yard! Whom have you been fighting?" inquired Mrs. Sharp.

"Nobody, missus. Man 'bove here flogged me," said Tom.

"Flogged you? What mischief you done?" she asked.

Tom explained to her.

"I leave him to you, Mrs. Sharp; I must go to work. He says he was once a slave," said Mr. Sharp; and went about his business.

Mrs. Sharp gave the fugitive some victuals, and heard him tell the story of his escape, and how he had lived since. It bore the impress of truth, and she believed it.

"You say your master is in Buffalo now?"

"Yas, missus; an' goes to de Falls to-day."

"It is lucky, after all, I think, that the captain set you off on this side. Your master is after you; depend on 't."

"Dinah's 'long, too," said the fugitive.

"Dinah! Who is Dinah?" asked Mrs. Sharp.

"My wife."

"Your wife!"

"Yas."

"Well, that is the luckiest of all. When she gets to the Falls, you must contrive some way to get her on to this side."

"Yas, missus. If I know'd how, dis nigger will do it," said the fugitive.

"Oh! easy 'nough. Well, wash up, and I will give you another shirt and pantaloons to put on; those are stiff with blood, and soiled," said Mrs. Sharp.

"Oh! how my back pains me!" exclaimed the fugitive.

"Yes; well, I'll bathe it in some oil; that will relieve the pain, I guess, and you will soon feel better," remarked Mrs. Sharp; and stepped to the cupboard for the bottle.

"Easy, missus, easy! it smarts awfully!" exclaimed the fugitive, as she poured a portion of the contents of the bottle upon his wounds.

"Never mind; it will soon be over."

"Do you knows missus Brown?"

"Mrs. Brown! she that lives at Saint Davids?"

"Yas, missus."

"If I do n't, I can't say I know myself," said Mrs. Sharp.

"I wish I neber left her, if she war so cross. I alwars had 'nough to eat. I thought of it dis morning."

"Did you ever live with that lady?"

"Yas, missus. I know'd her well," replied the fugitive; and explained the particulars.

"Now, Tom, as soon as you get possession of Dinah, do you take her to Mrs. Brown. It won't do to stay so near the line; they may kidknap you. Will you promise me to do this?"

"Yas, missus."

"And, be particular and lay your plans well."

"Yas, missus; neber fear dat."

"I 'm afraid you will not be equal to the emergency. I rather guess my husband had better help; yes, I am sure of it. Sharp must go this very night."

"Will he? I 'm so glad," said the fugitive, thankful that he still had friends.

"Will he, do you ask?"

"Yas, missus."

"Of course he will, if I say so. I'll call him. No, I won't. Let him stay till noon; there will be time enough, then."

"Plenty, missus," said the fugitive, delighted that he was to have the farmer's aid in rescuing Dinah.

"Make yourself contented, Tom, till Mr. Sharp comes in, and then we will arrange what 's to be done," said Mr. Sharp.

The fugitive felt at home at this farm-house, and soon went into the yard, and laid down on the grass and rested himself.

The farmer came up from the field at twelve o'clock. He was as punctual as the pointer. He noticed the negro, who was yet lying in the yard. The sun had got around on that side of the house, and shone full in the face of the fugitive; but this circumstance did not appear to make any difference with him. He lay as contented as before, and was sound asleep.

"What did you make out of the negro, Mrs. Sharp?" said the farmer, as he entered the house.

"Oh! Mr. Sharp, it is very lucky, I think, that he happened to give us a call," said she.

"Ah!"

"Yes. He wants help, and there never was a better opportunity for philanthropy?"

"Another colored beggar, hey! When will they stop coming? I wish some one would tell me that," remarked Mr. Sharp, with ill temper.

"There it is agin. You always think they want money. Mebbe they do sometimes; that 's not the case with Tom," said Mrs. Sharp, with a firm emphasis.

"What does that chap want?" he inquired.

"To rescue his wife, whom he has not lived with, now going on some four years," said Mrs. Sharp.

"Where is the woman?"

"She will be at the Falls to-night."

"How long to remain there?"

"That's doubtful; and therefore it is important to act promptly; and, Mr. Sharp, you must go down this afternoon, and help Tom plan how to do it," said Mrs. Sharp.

"Bless me!"

"Yes, this afternoon."

"And what is to be done with the hay, in the meantime? There are loads cured enough to haul into the barn."

"No matter for that; the boys will take care of it. And no matter, if they don't; it won't spoil," said she.

"Why, Mrs. Sharp, are you in earnest?"

"To be sure I am. Why not, pray?"

"You really want me to turn nigger-catcher!"

"Oh! pshaw! No nigger catching about about it," said Mrs. Sharp, twisting her neck and shaking her head; "only helping Tom in an emergency; that's all. Astonishing you are so obstinate and hard-hearted, Mr. Sharp. S'pose it was me, and Tom helped you, would you not feel it to be right? Just consider."

"O, there is no use of murmuring. I am in for whatever of this kind comes along, I expect. But, if the hay spoils, you must charge it to charity, Mrs. Sharp; don't complain to me. I s'pose it will rain this afternoon."

"Always borrowing trouble. I never did see the like!" said Mrs. Sharp, in a blunt tone.

“Well, when are Tom and myself to start?” asked Mr. Sharp, with more resignation of spirit.

“We think right after dinner. You will have to take the old mare, and she is not a very fast traveler, you know,” said Mrs. Sharp, in a subdued tone, and with more complacency.

“True; well thought of. I’ll go and get her up. They turned her, this morning, into the lower meadow,” said Mr. Sharp.

“No, no. Let our hired man do that; here he comes. You must shave and put on a clean shirt, just as soon as you can swallow your dinner. The more I think of this, the greater do I feel its importance,” said Mrs. Sharp.

“Very good. I s’pose Tom can eat after I get through, can’t he?” inquired Mr. Sharp.

“Certainly; I’ve not got quite as far as that yet. I guess the niggers can eat by themselves,” said Mrs. Sharp, vexed with her husband for making so silly a remark.

“I am glad to hear you express yourself so. I’ve been afraid, for some time, that I should have to go that too,” said Mr. Sharp, and drew a chair up to the table.

The farmer felt a reluctance to embark in the enterprise; but his wife urged him so hard, that he concluded to comply with her wish; and shortly after dinner, he took Tom into his buggy and started for the Falls. The negro had no idea how he could get possession of Dinah, and for a very good reason—he had not contemplated a rescue at Niagara, until

Mrs. Sharp made the suggestion. He had not even entertained the thought of following her there. It was by chance purely, that Jake, the free negro, took him across the river, and it was an accident merely that he wandered into the farmer's yard.

But Mr. Sharp was a man of method, as well as business; and if he had an enterprise afoot, it would have been unnatural, if he did not at once settle in his mind the details. Hence, they were not two miles on the way before he desired to know how the rescue was to be effected. The fugitive's views were vague, and wide of practical utility. He had never been on the American side at the Falls, knew no person there, and could not with any positiveness say whether the party would stop over even one train of cars. It was all conjecture, and quite unsatisfactory to a man constituted like Mr. Sharp.

"Astonishing," said he, "that Mrs. Sharp should consent to send me on a wild goose chase. It will all end in smoke, and I shall be the butt of my neighbors. I'm good mind, Tom, to turn 'round, and head the old mare for home."

"Try um, mass'r, little longer; when we get nearer the place, we can tell better. Dis nigger has notion dat it will come right in the eend."

"We are on a tom-fool's errand; nothing will come out of it," said Mr. Sharp, becoming more and more dissatisfied.

"Your ole woman knows best. Please try um, mass'r," said the fugitive.

"Well we will go as far as Chippewa. We want

some salt for the mow," replied Mr. Sharp, and "whipped up," so as to get home by the edge of evening.

The fugitive thought a ride as far as that was a point gained, as it respected himself, and offered no objection. The farmer dismissed the subject of running Dinah into Canada from his mind, and entertained himself with asking Tom a variety of questions concerning the life of the slaves at the South, until they turned from the river to go to the village of Chippewa.

"Now, Tom, I shall go no farther; and you can return or not, as you please," said he.

"Thank 'ee, mass'r, for the ride, but I believe I will stay," replied the fugitive, and they rode up to a store, and separated.

The planter and family, according to their intention, as expressed by Mary to her servant Dinah, left Buffalo for Niagara Falls. Upon their arrival at the American side, Mr. Erskine was solicited to take rooms at the Clifton House. Frederick suggested that the hotel might be an objectionable place for them to stop at, as it was in Canada. The two slaves might be disposed to avail themselves of the occasion to declare themselves free from servitude, and decline returning to the states. The suggestion did not appear to make any impression upon the mind of his father; and as the planter proposed to remain a few days, and entertaining the idea that he should enjoy himself more on the opposite side of the river, the party hurried down to the ferry, and crossed over to the Clifton House.

Satisfied with the accommodations, and delighted with the magnificent view of the greatest curiosity in the vast wonder-work of creation, neither the planter nor his family regretted that they took lodgings there. They passed the afternoon in viewing the cataract. The depth of the gulf, and the immense volume of water unceasingly pouring over the precipice, with its continued and solemn roar, filled them with profound awe and astonishment. As much as they had heard it described, and notwithstanding the high anticipations which they had formed of its sublimity, their views did not equal the reality, and were agreeably disappointed. Language was inadequate to express their admiration, and for hours they surveyed the scene in silence.

The two slaves were confounded. They had no conception of what they were to see, and were horror-struck. Prone to superstition naturally, they were the easier excited in that direction. They were shy of the abyss below them, and thought it was indeed bottomless. It required much persuasion on the part of Mary, to induce Dinah to accompany her down the road to the water. The slave would stop every now and then, and ask permission to turn around.

"Missus — head am dizzy. I shall fall—I know I shall! I feel when I start, as if I war guine to fall down," said the slave, sitting down, and seizing hold of a bush.

"Fie! Do n't be alarmed, Dinah. No danger here. We are in the road. You can't fall. Come along," replied Mary, amused at the fears of the slave.

"Oh! how the noise stuns me! I can't hear myself think," said the slave, rising up.

"Never fear, Dinah. The noise won't do us any harm. See Pompey! He's not afraid," said Mary, pointing to him, as he stood upon the very brink of the bank above them.

"He will surely fall, he will," said Dinah.

"Now look and see if he does. There, d'ye see? all safe. He got what he reached for, and is now handing it to Frederick," said Mary, as Pompey broke off a birchen twig.

"You would n't catch me doin' dat! It's much as I can do to hold my foothold here. No, no, missus," said Dinah.

"Well, come along; don't be afraid. We shall soon be at the foot of the hill," said Mary.

"What we gwine down dar' arter, missus?" asked Dinah, as she slowly and carefully followed.

"Nothing."

"Noffin."

"Why, bless you, for amusement. We can see how the cataract sounds down there. We did not stop long when we crossed the ferry. I think the roar is different at the bottom of the fall," replied Mary, trying to calm Dinah's fears.

"I seed all I wanted."

"We can look up, and see the water fall almost over our heads. It will be grand. There, stop and look now," said Mary, sitting upon a log by the way-side.

"No, missus."

"Well, I'm ashamed of you, Dinah. What are you

holding your hands up to your ears for?" inquired Mary.

"To keep um out, missus."

"What! the sound? Is that it, or are you afraid to look? Pshaw! how foolish!"

"Can't do it!" exclaimed the awe-stricken slave.

"What can't you do?" asked Mary.

"I'm afeard de debil libs up dar', an' he will soon jump down upon us," said Dinah, with a strange wildness in her manner.

"Ha, ha, ha! what an idea! Why, Dinah, do you really think what you say?"

"Do n't I, missus? Mas'r Bates said, dat God built his cabin way up in the clouds, but de ole debil lived in a frightful place, wid a deep, mighty big, deep hole under him, whar' he sent his slaves. I know'd as well as I want to know, he is up dar'," insisted the bewildered slave.

"Pooh! pooh! your mind is full of hobgoblins. I imagine that the evil one you speak of, is n't good enough to be the spirit of this place. Why, Dinah, this is one of the exhibitions of God's goodness and power — it's his own handiwork!" said Mary, in pity of the slave's ignorance.

Mary had not stayed half as long as she desired, but the slave appeared to be so much alarmed, she thought it would be cruel to keep her there longer.

When they reached the piazza of the hotel, Mary, to shame the slave, repeated what she said, and asked Pompey if he did not think it was ridiculous.

"Can't tell as to dat, but dis nigger ain't afeerd of

noffin. I do n't think much of mas'r Bates' talk. Dinah knows dat," replied Pompey, at the same time indulging himself in a loud laugh at her expense.

"You will go down the hill, won't you, Pompey?" asked Mary.

"To be sure, an' eeny whar' else you order," said he.

"You shall accompany brother and myself as we stroll, this evening," said Mary.

Dinah's feelings were hurt at this slight, and without saying any thing, she walked through the hall to the rear of the hotel. Mary regretted that she had injured her feelings without any good reason, and the planter felt that the comments of his daughter were uncalled for.

"Pompey, you go and pacify her," said he.

"Yes, do, and tell her that I want to see her," said Mary.

The slave at once complied with his master's request, for it was made more in that spirit than in a tone of command.

"As sure as I live," said Tom to Mr. Sharp—who finally concluded he would not return home from Chipewa, but come directly with Tom to the Falls—"Dar' she am! It is—it is my wife Dinah, in the land of freedom!"

They stopped, and "put up" the horse at a tavern near by the Clifton House; and then proceeded toward the cataract, with the intention of crossing to the other side, if they saw nothing of the party. Mr. Sharp did not expect to find the planter on the Canada side, and

as Dinah stood with her back toward them, he suspected that Tom was mistaken.

"I know'd her in darkest night. It's her," reiterated the fugitive, and went toward her.

"Now, gently, Tom. If you are right, I do n't see but that the job is done. Our care must be to git her out of sight of the planter. Then he will not be able to rescue her," said Mr. Sharp.

"Oh, I see her plainly. It am a fact. Dinah has got to Canada. Yes, an' dar comes ole Pompey—sure—no mistake," said the fugitive, and took his steps faster.

"Tom, see here. We must stop where we are, till after dusk. We shall be discovered, if we are not careful," said Mr. Sharp.

"Neber fear, mass'r; they can't take me now."

"But, man, they may take Dinah back, in spite of us. We must walk circumspect. Now, take my advice; will you?"

"Let me hear what you say, mass'r," replied the fugitive, his eyes intent upon Dinah, who seemed to be talking to Pompey.

"Why, we will loiter about this show house here, till it's too dark to see; and then we will reconnoitre the hotel. This is the way to make sure," replied Mr. Sharp.

"Berry good, master; I'm content to that, long as I see her," said the fugitive; and they entered an inclosure which contained some curiosities. Mr. Sharp gave the proprietor a few pennies, and listened to his garrulity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN MASTER AND SLAVE.

In the evening of the day on which the planter arrived at the Falls, Mary and her brother, Frederick, followed by the faithful Pompey, strolled some distance below the hotel, to view the wonders of the place by moonlight.

It was an evening of beauty. It would have commanded homage and admiration in any place; but there, with the beams of the moon resting upon those silvery waters, as they appeared upon the brink of the stupendous precipice, to plunge into the deep gulf below; that spray continually rising, from the violent and unceasing commingling of the immense streams of water, as they poured from the three points of the compass, and converging and dashing recklessly together, with such gigantic power as almost to make the earth itself tremble, in acknowledgement of the Almighty; that bow of promise vouchsafed so many centuries ago, and the covenant, of which it is a token, so sacredly kept, Mary and Frederick viewed with the

most pleasing sensations of delight. They sat down upon the ground, and looked, and admired. The mind of each was busy with thought, as it contemplated the inspiring and boundless theme. The mere falling of the water, and its great volume—the distance to which it descended—the eternal roar of the cataract—the splendid rainbow, arching the frightful whirlpool—all, in turn, had excited their wonder and admiration. But now there was something—they knew not what—which enchained their attention, and enchanted their imagination.

“Mary,” said Frederick, finally, “come; I am tired with looking. Let us go back and enjoy the music and hop.”

“Tired, did you say? I should never tire of this,” replied Mary.

“It is the only thing, I reckon, which you would n’t tire of,” said her brother, playfully.

“No, Frederick, you are mistaken in that notion,” replied Mary, taking no exceptions to the jesting remark of her brother; “there is at least one other thing, you may be certain.”

“Pray, name it, Mary.”

“The ocean. I never got tired of that, the summer I visited the sea shore,” she replied.

“Niagara and the Ocean! Well, I will intercede with father, to wed you to one or the other. So, come; I would like to have a short hop,” said Frederick.

They looked around for Pompey, but seeing him nowhere, supposed he had tired of the scenery sooner than themselves, and returned. They thought no more

of him, and entering the parlor of the hotel, participated in the dance. The planter was there, looking on, and enjoying himself with the amusement. He had made the acquaintance of some of the guests, and, happy in conversation, felt himself quite at home. He received all the attention he desired, from the domestics of the house, and seemed to forget that he had any of his own. Having no occasion for the services of Pompey or Dinah, he had not seen them since tea. After wearying himself with the pleasures of the public room, he retired to his apartments, more gratified than ever that he yielded to Mary's solicitation, and determined to pass the summer at the North.

While the planter and his children were thus enjoying themselves, quite a different scene was performed outside.

We left Mr. Sharp and the fugitive listening to the wonderful talk of the showman. As the moon made the evening so light, they remained inside the inclosure longer than they intended or then desired. Finally, the fugitive became so impatient that Mr. Sharp consented to go out and see what could be done.

They went near the hotel, but were unable to get a sight of Dinah. Hearing music, they went around in front, and Mr. Sharp went on to the piazza. He could not get a sight of either the planter, or children, or servants, and returned to the fugitive.

"They have gone across to the other side, Tom, I guess ; I can see nothing of them," said he to the fugitive.

"Dar' now, mass'r, you hab spoil'd it all. It's all

wrong, guine to see de show. If I had n't stopped, Dinah now would hab bin wid me."

"Yes, just so; and instead of being in Canada, enjoying freedom, probably the master would have now had you fast."

"How do you make dat out?"

"You would been seen together, and there are plenty of people to be hired to take the job of carrying both of you off. There is nothing like money; it will move almost everything," said Mr. Sharp.

"I am sorry, mass'r Sharp, 'kase I did n't go right on, when I seed her in de yard," said the fugitive, with a sigh, believing that there was no chance of recovering his wife.

"Hist! there goes a couple of colored persons; let's see where they go. It may be them. Who knows, after all, but that we are acting under Providence!" said Mr. Sharp.

Tom looked in the direction pointed out by his companion, and immediately exclaimed, loud enough to be heard by the persons themselves,

"It's them! it's them, mass'r Sharp! it's them! Dis nigger keeps close to um."

"Hist! Tom, you will wake the whole neighborhood, if you don't talk lower; be quiet," said Mr. Sharp.

They followed the persons alluded to; and as they approached them, the fugitive exclaimed again, in a louder voice than was agreeable to Mr. Sharp,

"Dinah! Dinah—my wife, sure!" and almost jumped to her side. He came so suddenly, Dinah

was at first alarmed ; for she did not expect to see her husband there. "What ! do n't you know me ?" he said, in a most plaintive tone. They were in the shade of a thicket. Dinah had not forgotten the voice, if she did start at his sudden embrace.

"Oh ! Tommy, Tommy ! — is it you ? Who'd thought that night you left our cabin, we should see each oder so ?" she said, and hung her head upon his bosom.

Pompey was glad to take the hand of his old comrade, and shook it heartily. But the fugitive was too much taken up with his wife to return his friendship, and made no reply to Pompey's questions.

"I seed how it an. You consider yourself your own. Neber mind, Uncle Tom ; dis nigger is honest. He do n't run off, like tief, in de dark night," said Pompey.

Mr. Sharp disliked to see this ebullition of feeling, and tried to pacify the excited slave, by reminding him that the fugitive's undivided attention to his wife was most natural, and any inattention to him, at that particular time, should be overlooked.

"He can be civil to his ole frien', eenyhow. I dunno you," said Pompey. In the meantime, the fugitive had gone aside a few steps, and was in busy conversation with Dinah. He did not heed Pompey's remark.

"Do n't interrupt them," said Mr. Sharp, laying his hand gently on Pompey's shoulder, as he was on the point of going up to the fugitive.

"Take dat off my body, an' let me go 'bout my business," said the latter, fiercely.

Mr. Sharp was confounded. He did not expect to witness so much ill nature among friends, and especially among slaves in that particular locality. He withdrew his hand, for he had no notion of having a fight at fisticuffs with a colored person, under those circumstances.

"Dinah," said Pompey, "I am guine back to de hotel."

"Wait a minute, an' I'll go wid ye," replied Dinah.

"No; I've lost all patience wid dat nigger, if he am his own," said Pompey. The fugitive looked up in wonderment. He had been so much absorbed in his attention to his wife, that he was totally unconscious of his incivility.

"Wha'! wha' dat you mention, Pompey?" he asked.

"I sez I am not to be insulted in dis manner; I'll let you know I am as good as any nigger, eenyhow."

"Who insult you? mass'r Sharp?"

"Mass'r Sharp! am dat the individual's name?"

"Yas; he am my frien', your frien', an' Dinah's. Do n't I speak um as it am?" inquired the fugitive.

"I am the friend of the colored race; that is to say, the poor African race. They all share alike my sympathy. I feel it a duty to aid them, else I should n't be here. That you know, from personal experience," replied Mr. Sharp.

"Dar, Pompey, you seed how it is. We are friends. We come to help you and Dinah," said the fugitive.

"I want none of your help; massa gibbs me all dat,

when I wants it," replied Pompey, as independently as if he had paid for himself.

"Wha' d' ye mean? I do n't know what you would be arter?"

"Hav n't you ears?"

"Yas; I heard you, Pompey."

"Berry good. Den, if you heerd me, do n't ax me why. Come, Dinah, I'm guine to de hotel," said Pompey.

"An' leave Tommy so quick?" she said.

"No. He can come along too, if he am not asham'd of himself. I s'pose he need n't be afraid of massa here. I calculate dis am mass'r Bates' state of freedom. Massa can't take um now," replied Pompey.

"Oh, yes, Tommy, come along. Massa, I'll be boun', will talk wid you. Missus Mary, I know'd will. Come," said Dinah.

"That will not do. No, no," interposed Mr. Sharp.

"If Pompey will not stay," said the fugitive, "let him go, an' leave you wid us. You're not afeerd to stay wid your own Tommy."

"No, but I must not leave missus," she replied.

"Pooh! Wha' care you for her. You can now be free wid me. You won't think of guine to Virginny, I s'pect, now," said the fugitive.

Mr. Sharp reiterated the same remark. Dinah was suffering the most intense agony of spirit. She could not bear to part so quick with him she loved so dearly, and mourned so long for dead. And yet she did not fail to remember in her extremity the goodness of Mary in allowing her to come north. If it had not been for

that, she would not even have the pleasure of seeing and knowing that he was in the land of the living. This thought filled her heart with thankfulness, and in spite of the pain of parting again, she could not think of breaking the promise so solemnly made—not to give her massa any unnecessary trouble. And yet, as her husband would run no risk of forfeiting his independence, even if seen by the planter, she could not think of allowing him to leave her presence so quickly, and importuned him to go to the hotel. He was inclined to accede to the request, and undoubtedly would have done so, had not Mr. Sharp stoutly objected. As it was, the fugitive promised to see her in the morning.

“You won’t miss to be here arter breakfast,” said he to Dinah.

“Depend on ’t.”

“An’, Dinah, I hopes you will then say yes to what I ax you—to lib wid me here,” he repeated.

“Neber—neber, Tommy.”

“Not even if your master consents,” remarked Mr. Sharp.

“Dunno.”

“Oh, I know’d you will,” said the fugitive.

“An’ leave our children alone in Virginny?” she said.

The fugitive did not make any answer. If they bid each other good night, it was not heard.

In the morning Dinah kept her promise, but the fugitive was at the thicket before her. He meant, if possible, to persuade her to go with him into the interior of Canada, and not return to the plantation. Thinking

that the presence of Mr. Sharp might embarrass her, he came to the thicket without him.

"Now, Dinah," said he, as she seated herself on a log, "take my advice, an' be no longer slave."

"Tommy, dere 's no use talking so."

"What! won't you on no account?" he inquired.

"No, no."

"Tell me de reason."

"I do n't wish to starve! dat's de reason," she replied.

"Dar' no danger."

"I know'd dere am. You hab already eenymost starved."

"Who told you dat?"

"Nelly."

"Nelly!"

"Yas, Nelly."

"Whar' did you see her to talk?" inquired the fugitive, surprised to learn that Dinah and Nelly were together long enough for that.

"Oh, I seed her, and she told me all 'bout it. I should n't s'pose you would want me to run risk of dying, too," she replied.

"But whar', Dinah?"

"In a road in Buffalo town."

"Did she speak of dat big snow bank, an' how cold it war'?"

"All, wid particulars."

"Den dis nigger says noffin. I gibs um up," said the fugitive, despairing of being able to persuade his wife to remain.

"I likes to hear dat. Oh! I wish I could hear you say anoder thing," said Dinah, with much emotion.

"Talk um, Dinah — talk um."

"Oh! how I pray, night and morning, you would go home," a tear dropping from her eyes, in spite of her resolution to be calm.

"Home! home! No, Dinah. I can't think of sich thing."

"Why not? You would then get out of misery."

"Mistaken — mistaken," said the fugitive.

"You enjoy'd yourself afore, if you would only think so."

"Do you s'pose I likes to be shut up like de beast?"

"Pshaw! Only once, and I pitied you."

"Massa now neber would let me out, if I went back."

"Would n't you like to see him?" asked Dinah.

"Yes, but I am not to be taken."

"How 's dat, when you are free?"

"Oh, I am my own man here."

"Berry good. S'pose you go wid me to the hotel, and see missus Mary an' mass'r Frederick. Dey will be glad to see *you*. I know'd so, Tommy."

"Dinah, dere is design somewhere. You want um to take me. No, no; I am too old. You must set bigger trap if you s'pect to catch um. I shall not run my nose in wid eyes open," replied the fugitive, suspicious that Dinah was planning to capture him.

"Pshaw!"

"Oh, but you can't cheat dis nigger."

"What foolish man! Only jist to see and talk, dat 's all," said Dinah, trying to allay his fears.

"No, I tell you. No. I will not trust myself," he replied, with an increased energy, and more determined voice.

"Well, I do n't see what you are to fear. Dis am de land of freedom. You are your own master, and can come and go as you please. You need n't stay half a minute. I do n't care 'bout you' guine. I thought it would please you to see them. I'll say no more of it," replied Dinah, and rose up from the log.

"You are not guine to leave me, Dinah?" asked the fugitive.

"It 's time. Missus Mary wants me by this. She is now dressing, I s'pose. The sun is high."

"Do n't you think massa would force me?" asked the fugitive, desiring to be in his wife's company longer.

"Neber! be glad to see you. Come; I 'll be answerable," said she.

"I 'm most good mind to try um," he replied.

"Come along, Tommy, I neber seed you look so foolish."

Without saying yes or no, the fugitive accepted the invitation, if rising and walking in the same direction with his wife can be so construed. He did not move with much will, though. Every few steps he would falter, and try to engage her in conversation, but it was of no use. She hurried the more, and gave him no opportunity to talk. They soon reached the piazza. He hesitated to ascend the steps. But Dinah made no stop, and immediately entered the wide hall.

"Come along, Tommy," she said.

"Whar' you guine to lead me?" he whispered.

"Oh, never mind. Come along, and trust me," she replied.

The fugitive thought he might as well go forward as back. Dinah would tell them she had seen him, and they would immediately be on the search. He complied with her direction without more ado, and winding up several flights of stairs, found himself near the roof of the building.

"Dare," said she, as they entered a small room in an upper story called the attic, "you stay here till I call for you. This am de room I occupy. Pompey's close by. I'll go and wait upon missus. I'll soon be back."

"Dinah, do n't you tell um I'm here. If you do, it will be the death of me, sartin. Massa would just as lief as not tumble me out o' the window," said he.

"Pshaw! Tommy be quiet now. Dinah will be answerable for your safety. Neber fear. I hav'n't felt so good sin' you left our cabin. Oh! how glad I am missus took me," said she, and descended the stairs with a heart lightened of a heavy load of grief.

Mary was astir earlier than usual, for the thunder of the cataract awakened her long before day-break, and she thought it would be delightful to view the wonder as the morning sun first greeted the waters. She was quite ready to find Frederick, when Dinah knocked at her door. The slave was astonished to find her dressed, and attempted to excuse the delay.

"I rose before my time—no blame to you. You go and see if brother Frederick is ready for a walk before breakfast," said Mary.

Dinah obeyed, and returned for answer, that her young master had gone under the "sheet."

"Ah! he thought I would be afraid, and so did not invite me. Well, I believe, after all, I will indulge myself with a bath. You can go with me to the bath-house, Dinah," said Mary.

Whilst the slave was thus waiting upon her mistress, Pompey happening to look into her room, in the attic, to his surprise discovered the fugitive.

"Yah! yah! yah! come home to roost, arter all, hab you, Uncle Tom? yah! yah! yah! Well, glad to see you," said he, disposed to be merry over it.

"Hist! you wake up massa," said the fugitive.

"No matter; he would like to see you. I'm guine right down to tell him."

"Now, Pompey, I did n't think dat of you."

"Why, Lor' bless you! Do n't you want to see ole massa? He was full of fun last night. He won't hurt you; do n't be afeerd," said Pompey, standing in the door.

"Dis nigger am not ready to see him. I must compose my mind."

"No matter 'bout dat. Massa shall see you. I'm thinking you will run, so I will jist turn the key outside; den you won't find it difficult to compose your mind till I come," said Pompey; and without further ceremony, locked the door, and scampered down the stairs to the planter's room.

Mr. Erskine was not up; but not troubling himself to lock the door when he went to bed, Pompey found

no difficulty in obtaining admittance. His master was awake.

"Well, Pompey, are you stirring? I reckon it would do me no hurt to walk in the fresh air," remarked the planter.

"Good news, massa!" exclaimed the slave.

"What now, Pompey?"

"Seen Uncle Tom."

"You do n't say so! Where, pray?" asked the planter.

"Here."

"In this hotel, do you mean?"

"Yas, massa; he's up in Dinah's room," said Pompey.

"Bless me! I should like to see him myself—just to look at him. Is he altered much?" asked the planter, at once rising from his bed and slipping on his clothes.

"Little older—looks as if he might hab seen trouble; gray hairs thicker—dat's 'bout all, massa."

"Well, go up and bring him down here. Tell him I shall be happy to shake his hand," said the planter.

"I'm afeerd, if I do dat, he will run away; I turn'd de key as I came out Dinah's room," said Pompey.

"Very good. I will go up myself. Give me my slippers, Pompey," said the planter; and ascended the stairs.

Pompey turned the key to Dinah's door, and in they walked. There sat the fugitive on the side of the bed, the perspiration standing in large drops on his forehead, and trembling from head to foot with affright. The

planter extended his hand, and with a pleasant smile upon his countenance, inquired after his health. The fugitive would fain make answer, but the words stuck in his throat.

"Why, are you sick, Tom? You look as though you were going into an ague fit. Can't you speak to your old master?" asked the planter, in a bland voice.

The fugitive made no answer at first; but the planter treated him so kindly, and different from what he anticipated, that he lost his fear in a moment or two, and felt more at ease.

"I thought you would n't speak to me, if you seed me," finally he said.

"Oh! to be sure. You lived too long with me to be forgotten. Where do you stay, Tom?" asked the planter.

The fugitive was at a loss what to say in reply.

"Are you stopping here at the Falls?"

"No, mass'r."

"Where is your home?"

"I can't say, mass'r."

"Do you mean to say you have no home?" said the planter, beginning to take pity on him.

"I hab lived in Buffalo sometime back."

"Hard times, Tom—eh?"

"Yas, mass'r."

"Well, I am sorry to find you in such condition. But, I suppose you consider yourself free, and that thought recompenses you for all your trouble in obtaining a livelihood," said the planter.

"Danno, mass'r."



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"Well, here comes Dinah. She, of course, is glad to meet you. She has almost cried her eyes out to see you, time and again."

"Oh! massa, I wish he would go back to our cabin. I told him so," said Dinah, looking at her master imploringly.

"Very good. He can go if he chooses," said the planter.

"Dare, Tommy; what did I tell you? You see Dinah am your best friend, arter all."

"Yes, Tom; if you wish to return to the plantation, the way is open," said the planter.

"Oh! Tommy, you will go—won't you?" said Dinah.

The fugitive was dumb; he did not know what to say.

"Why do n't you speak, Tommy?" asked Dinah.

"I knows, massa, why he says noffin," remarked Pompey.

"Well, what is the reason?" asked the planter.

"He 's afeerd of punishment; dat 's what it is."

"He deserves it no doubt, for his evil deeds," replied the planter.

"But, massa, won't you pardon him?" beseechingly inquired Dinah.

"Oh! yes; for your sake, if for no other reason. — But upon this express condition, that he acts right—just as Uncle Tom did, year after year, before Mr. Gravity imprisoned him in the old hovel," replied the planter.

"That I know he will do, eenyhow—he will be de real Uncle Tom. Won't you?" said Dinah.

“Dunno. Your talk drives me almost mad,” remarked the fugitive, perplexed in his mind what to do.

“Why, Tom, if that is n’t you!” exclaimed Mary, rushing into the room for Dinah to accompany her to the “sheet,” where Frederick had gone; “where in creation did you come from? Why, father, it is really our Tom! Well, I take it, you are going home with us. Where on earth did you get those ole pantaloons? How they look! Stand up, and let us see how they do look on you—ha! ha! ha! Why, Tom, they are a rod above your ancles—ha! ha! ha! Where did you get them?”

“Oh! missus, them do n’t fit at all. Poor mau, he has had hard time of it. We can brush him up, may n’t we, if he only will go home, missus?” asked Dinah, ashamed of his appearance.

“Certainly; father will consent, I have no doubt,” said Mary.

“Yes, yes; if he will promise to be good. Come, Pompey, I will go and take a bath. You can arrange with Tom, Mary,” said the planter; and left the room.

“Tom, cheer up and be sociable. If you can make up your mind to be good, we will take you home again. What say you? Speak quick; I’m in a hurry. Well, you can let Dinah know, when she comes in from the ‘sheet.’ It won’t be long,” said Mary; and she and Dinah left the room also.

The scenes of the morning seemed to the fugitive to be almost a dream. The kindness of manner with which his old master had received him—and especially

Mary — was wholly unexpected. He was very agreeably disappointed, and began to entertain serious thoughts of accepting the invitation to return to the plantation. He had long since ceased to admire the privileges of freedom; for, however it might be with others, his expectations had not been realized. When the subject of returning was first broached to him, the great and only objection, was his dislike to encounter the indignation of an offended master. The interview dispelled all uneasiness in that respect, and as he now sat alone in the room, conning the subject over in his mind, he came to the conclusion not to part company again with his wife.

“Dinah,” said he, as she returned, almost out of breath, from her attendance on Mary, “if you think much of me, you will stay here.”

“Tommy, dere ’s no use of talking so,” she replied.

“I alwars know’d you obstinate, Dinah.”

“You could n’t hire me to stay here,” said she.

“For noffin?”

“Da’s it.”

“You guine to leave your poor Tom agin?”

“How you talk! hav’ n’t I ax’d you over and over agin?”

“Not in earnest, I’m afeerd, Dinah.”

“Dis am too much, Tommy! Has n’t all of us ax’d you to go home to de cabin? I begin to think you are out of your head. It ’s strange talk, at eenyrate,” said Dinah, vexed at the fugitive’s pretended stupidity.

“S’pose I say dat I’ll go? I know you will be ashamed of me.”

“Will you, Tommy? Oh! I am so glad! I will tell missus Mary of it, as soon as she gits to her room,” said Dinah, delighted to hear him say so.

“Yas, dat’s what I am thinkin’ of.”

“Good — good! Less hurry down stairs, and tell Pompey, he will be so glad to hear it,” said Dinah.

“Well, I must go and find mass’r Sharp, and say it to him.”

“When will you be back, Tommy?”

“Not long fust; jist soon as I seed um,” said he.

“Now you do act like de real Uncle Tom—yah! yah! yah!” said Dinah.

The fugitive left the hotel to find his friend, Mr. Sharp, and Dinah ran to tell Pompey the good news.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

UNCLE TOM'S DECISION.

The fugitive found Mr. Sharp anxiously waiting for him, at the inn where they "put up." It was some distance from the Clifton House. He told his friend, in a plain, straight-forward manner, what he purposed to do. Mr. Sharp could hardly believe it.

"Why, man, if you go back, the horrors of the middle passage will be no comparison to what you will suffer. And I should not wonder if they killed you—actually killed you with bad treatment," said Mr. Sharp.

"Dis nigger am not afeerd of dat," said the fugitive, with perfect calmness and self-possession.

"But can't you persuade Dinah to remain with you in Canada? Is she flighty, Tom?"

"Dere 's no use of talkin' to her. She is bent upon having her own way," said the fugitive.

"It is strange—very strange—that a slave should desire to quit this country. I can not understand it. If they are treated half as bad as is represented, I should suppose slavery would be the last place

where they would wish to go. I repeat, I can't understand it," said Mr. Sharp, vexed that the fugitive even thought of going home with his master.

"Why, mass'r Sharp? Tell me why I should want to stay and freeze, and starve. I hab 'nough of it."

"Because your fortune heretofore has been bad, is that a good reason to suppose it will continue? Nonsense! You have been what we call unlucky. Better times ahead. You are now acclimated; learnt the ways of people, and you know better how to take time by foretop. Now is the time to profit by experience. Fudge! abandon at once all notion of returning with the planter," said Mr. Sharp.

"Dunno, mass'r."

"Why, Tom, Dinah has put this nonsense into your head; I know she has. But as you please. It is your own business; I have nothing to say. If you are bent upon it, why go; but it will be a nice commentary, I think, on our efforts to befriend you," said Mr. Sharp, out of patience.

"You look cross. I ax your pardon, if I 've offended you. Mass'r Sharp sez stay. What will poor Tom do to get living? Tried ebery ting he knows of now. Do n't do no good," replied the fugitive, shaking his head and starting off.

"Determined to go, then, are you?"

"Yas; I can't make my will say stay."

"What shall I tell Mrs. Sharp, Tom?"

"Dat poor Tom am guine home."

Mr. Sharp was slow to believe that the fugitive was in earnest. He felt ashamed to see his wife, and be

compelled to inform her that he had not only failed to get Dinah, but had lost Tom also. He never should hear the last of it. No; that would n't do. He must make one more effort to change the fugitive's views, and keep him at any rate.

Whilst the honest, single-minded farmer, from the best of motives, was thus considering what course to pursue, the fugitive left the inn. Mr. Sharp thought it was his duty to follow, and see if he could not persuade him to remain. He noticed that the fugitive stopped to talk with some person. He hurried on, and in a moment was by his side

“Mass'r Bates, do you says so, really, for gospel?” was the question of the fugitive, as the farmer came up.

“If I did not feel it in my heart, I would n't advise you to do so,” replied the gentleman, who was a stranger to the farmer.

It was no other, reader, than the veritable school-master, Mr. Bates. After his return to the North, he had paid more attention to his books, and less to the various political topics of the day. And the result was, instead of looking through a glass darkly, he took a more dispassionate view — especially of the question of slavery. His opinions upon that perplexing subject had undergone a modification. He knew the actual condition of the slave, from personal observation, and he also knew the real condition of the colored population at the North. He was aware of the delicate position occupied by the slaveholder, and how much there was said and done to excite malevolence. There might be isolated cases of servants fleeing from their

masters and prospering. But, as a general thing, so far as the enjoyment of happiness was concerned, they were disappointed. He had been spending several days at this fashionable summer resort, and casually fell in company with the fugitive that morning. He did not at first recognize the negro, his appearance was so much changed, and having no expectation of meeting him there. But Tom knew the schoolmaster, the moment he saw him, and freely told him that the planter was in the neighborhood, and that he meant to return with his master to Oakland. Tom expected that the schoolmaster would try to dissuade him from doing so, and was surprised to hear him talk differently.

"Dis am mass'r Bates," said he to Mr. Sharp, as the farmer came up to them, "he agrees wid me."

"Then he can not be a friend to the colored man," said Mr. Sharp, snappishly.

Mr. Bates smiled, and remarked that he did not care about entering into any controversy on that point. "If you had seen this old man in his cabin, as I did, you would not hesitate to say I am right in my advice," he added, and was about to pass along.

"Mass'r Bates, s'pose you go an' see massa. My young mass'r and missus are along, too. Come."

Mr. Bates hardly knew what to do. He felt as though he had done Mr. Erskine a great wrong, and would rather keep out of his presence. But Tom urged him so hard, he consented to go back and make a friendly call.

The farmer did not fancy the talk, and began to abandon all hope of success.

"Blast the slaves!" said he to himself, but loud enough to be overheard, if he had not halted to speak to some person on the common, beckoning him to stop; "I will not bother myself any more about them. If Mrs. Sharp must fret and scold, why let her do it; I am not going to run around and keep myself in a stew for them, any longer. If they are mind to come here and live, why let them take care of themselves, like other people."

The man on the common turned out to be Mr. Brown. It seemed, that Nelly could learn nothing of the whereabouts of Tom, from the free negro, Jake, or from Hard; and thinking he might have gone to the inn at Saint Davids, she took the boat to Chippewa, and from thence by railroad to Queenston—a small village only a short distance. She reached Mr. Brown's place late in the afternoon; and Mrs. Brown concluded that her husband should take the washer-woman to the Falls, before breakfast the ensuing morning. He had just arrived, when he espied his friend, Mr. Sharp, Tom, and another gentleman, in conference together. He hurried toward them, and fortunately attracted the attention of the farmer.

"Tom's master, I understand, is over the other side," said he, running up to Mr. Sharp; "who is that gentleman walking with him?"

"His name is given me as Bates."

"Who is he? A friend, I take it?"

"Well, yes; I s'pose we can call him so."

"You speak as if you doubted it. Where is he and Tom going?" asked Mr. Brown.

"The negro is on his way to the Clifton House, and he asked the gentleman to go along."

"Ah! I see. He has gone to look for his wife. He do n't think of crossing, I hope—does he?" inquired Mr. Brown.

"Oh! he has seen her already," said Mr. Sharp.

"Good news! I am right glad to hear so. She finally consented to come over, hey? Very well; the master can go home two less now," remarked Mr. Brown.

"I do n't see very well how she could do otherwise than come over; for, I understand, the master would not stop on the American side," coolly replied Mr. Sharp.

"You do n't say the planter stopped—" Mr. Brown's breath was so short, from astonishment, that the last word uttered was inaudible.

"He put up at the Clifton House," said Mr. Sharp.

"At the Clifton House! And brought his slaves with him? The man must be crazy, I do believe."

"It's so, Mr. Brown; and that's not the worst of it. Tom is going home with him!"

"Tom going home again!" exclaimed Mr. Brown.

"It's actually so," said Mr. Sharp.

"Well, well; I wonder what Mrs. Brown will say now?" said Mr. Brown, almost overcome with the news.

Mr. Sharp suggested that Tom would soon be out of sight, if they remained where they were.

"We must put a stop to this," said Mr. Brown.

"Out of the question, sir."

"Tom can't be such a dunce!"

"I am not prepared to say he is not right," replied Mr. Sharp.

"What! I trust you have not advised him to this course."

"Not exactly, sir."

"How is this, Mr. Sharp? You seem to be reserved. I took it for granted that we should act in unison."

"Certainly, Mr. Brown. But if the negro has gone through one-half what he says he has, I can't blame him. He has been near starvation, and my only wonder is, that he is alive," replied Mr. Sharp.

"Ah! I believe I understand you. You go for gradual emancipation; I told Mrs. Brown I suspected as much. Mrs. Sharp don't, though, I can tell you!" said Mr. Brown, with a sneer.

"I think we should look at things just as they are; there is no use in blinding our eyes. Take Tom, for example; is his condition improved?"

"Only one case out of a hundred, sir. He has been unlucky, as we term it; that's all."

"I can't admit that. But, no matter; you agree his condition is not bettered. Why not favor his return home?"

"The principle, sir, is at stake; and how do we know but that he will be more fortunate hereafter. He has paid for his experience; and, I presume, learned wisdom from the past," replied Mr. Brown.

They reached the hotel without overtaking the negro, and lost sight of him.

"I should like to get a look at his master," said Mr. Brown, as they entered the house; "and we must

hurry and find Tom. Should n't be surprised if they have already taken him across."

"We will go into the sitting-room; perhaps Mr. Bates may be there," said Mr. Sharp.

"Do you know the planter?"

"No."

"Seen him, of course?"

"No; I hav n't set my eyes on him yet; that it, I have not recognized him yet."

"Well, I should like to make his acquaintance. I would like to hear his justification; the old story, though, I presume," remarked Mr. Brown.

"There is Mr. Bates, now," said Mr. Sharp, as they entered the sitting-room. "I'll introduce you to him;" and they crossed the room to the window.

"My friend, Mr. Brown," said Mr. Sharp to Mr. Bates.

Mr. Bates was conversing with the planter, and barely had an opportunity to intimate to the planter his advice to Tom to return, when the farmer and innkeeper came to the window. He gave both of them an introduction to Mr. Erskine, who politely invited them to be seated.

The innkeeper remarked that Tom had lived with him for several months, and left contrary to his wish.

"Any charges, sir?" asked the planter.

The innkeeper was amazed at this unexpected question, and hemmed and coughed, and did not make much of a reply.

"How did I understand you, sir?" asked the planter, with remarkable complacency.

The innkeeper felt abashed, but succeeded in stammering, "I will ask Mrs. Brown, sir."

"Thank you — will be much obliged," replied the planter; and turned again to Mr. Bates.

"Shall we be moving?" said the innkeeper presently to the farmer, in an undertone.

Mr. Sharp was too much interested in the conversation between the planter and Mr. Bates, to heed the innkeeper's remark. Shortly, the planter asked of Mr. Sharp if he resided at the Falls, and other commonplace questions. The innkeeper was envious of the planter's attention to the farmer.

"I understand you claim Tom, sir?" he said.

"For what?" quickly asked the planter.

"As your slave, sir."

"I am not aware of that. He is my property, no doubt, as the law stands with us. But he can do as he likes; return home or stay, as may suit his disposition."

"He has a good heart, sir. But, you are aware we go against servitude here. This is a free country."

"You mean free in a limited sense, I apprehend."

"No, sir; it's general."

"Yes; the blacks are free. But, in my country, the whites are free. Give me the stars and stripes; that's the flag for me," replied the planter; and rose to leave the room.

"I am sorry, sir, I can't agree with you. I will say one thing, though; you don't seem to be afraid to bring your slaves here. I am told you have two in your company," said the innkeeper.

"Yes; and I would bring the whole plantation, without being afraid that they would leave me," replied the planter.

"You see he has no fear," remarked Mr. Sharp to his friend, as they walked into the hall.

"It 's all put on for the occasion. We must look up Tom, and persuade him to go to Saint Davids. It will never do to let him go in this way; he will suffer if they get him back. The planter has taken this course because he believes it better than to use force. You can depend upon it, I am right. If I can have a chance to talk to Tom, he will take my advice," said the innkeeper.

"Well, we will loiter until you see him," replied Mr. Sharp, glad that the innkeeper was there to take the lead. He cared but little as to the result.

Mr. Brown assented, and they whiled away the time in gazing at the strangers. In the course of an hour or so, Tom made his appearance, and Mr. Brown found no difficulty in engaging the negro in conversation. The innkeeper went aside with him into the garden, and undertook to divest him of the notion of going back with his master, by picturing, as vividly as he could, his situation and the pains and service he would be compelled to undergo when he reached home. Tom could not appreciate it. The pains and service he had suffered since he came away, were constantly in his mind; and he disliked the idea of making another experiment.

"I can't try um again," he said.

"The trouble is," said Mr. Brown, "that friend who

advised you to run away—and now, very strangely, it appears to me, advises you to return—give you too big expectations. No wonder your disappointment. But mark what I tell you, he is as far from sense now as he was then,” said Mr. Brown.

“Mass'r Bates hab repented,” said Tom.

“Pooh! Do n't talk to me about repentance! He has been bought! The planter has hired him to advise you to go back,” said Mr. Brown.

“Dunno,” said Tom.

“I know; and let me tell you, you are unwise to listen to a single word he says. His motives are all wrong. Come, go with me, and ask your real friend, Nelly—she that kept the breath of life in you, when you lay at the point of death last winter—and see what she says. If her advice is to go, I won't say another word about it; and I will pick my way home at once,” said Mr. Brown.

“Nelly! d 'ye say? Whar' am she?”

“Near by. Come. She is the friend for you to consult,” said Mr. Brown.

Tom liked Nelly, and felt grateful for the interest she had manifested in his welfare. Happy to see her once more, if only to say good-bye, he complied with the inn-keeper's request, and accompanied him to the hill, some distance in the rear of the hotel.

Mrs. Brown stopped at a private house, and Nelly remained there during his absence at the Clifton House, because he ordered her to do so, not because she was not anxious to see Tom. As they entered the yard, she bounded out of the house, and greeted Tom heartily.

"Mr. Brown was so long coming, I had about given you up for lost, Tom," she said.

"Neber fear dat. Jake war' against me, though."

"Have you found Dinah?"

"Ax mass'r Brown if I hav n't."

"Well, can you get her?" asked Nelly, secretly wishing he had not, and partly believing so, for she heard that the planter did not halt at the Falls.

"No," interposed the innkeeper, "but she's got him."

"Nonsense! Mr. Brown."

"True. He is going home with her!" said Mr. Brown.

"Impossible! Tom, it is false! I know it is," exclaimed Nelly.

The negro felt mortified, and regretted he left the hotel, and making no reply, moved towards the gate.

"You are not going so quick, Tom?" asked Nelly, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Yas, they are waitin'," he replied.

"And you do not care for the poor washwoman! Oh! Tom, Tom! This comes from taking sich good care of you! If it was not for me, you would have been under the turf long ago! And you know it, too," said Nelly, her eyes moist with grief.

"Do n't hab sich bad feelin's, Nelly, massa will make it right with you. He am at the hotel. You can go wid me to him, an' I'll tell him all about it."

Nelly had no time to parley, as Tom immediately went out of the yard.

"Set him against that southern friend, Mr. Bates. He is hired to mislead," said the innkeeper, as she passed through the gate.

The washer-woman did not know exactly what that remark meant, as Mr. Brown had no opportunity to explain.

"Tom, do n't walk so fast—plenty o' time. I want to talk with you," she remarked.

"Berry good. Alwars willin' to hear yer talk, Nelly."

"Can it be, you are really going to the plantation?"

"Yas."

"What makes you act so? Who is this Mr. Bates?"

"Why, hav n't I told you who he was?"

"Something said concerning him, at our house on Vine street."

"Did n't I told you who he am, dat morning I seed um on the street in Buffalo? Sure I did. Do n't ax me sich foolish questions, when you know'd all, yourself," said Tom, in any thing but a pleasant voice.

The washer-woman deemed it prudent to abandon that inquiry.

"What is the reason Dinah won't stay? I think she would if urged, now she is in Canada," said Nelly, changing the subject.

"No, an' to tell you as I feel, why should she? Nothin' to live on—nothin' to do—no whar' to lay our heads," he replied.

"Mrs. Brown said you could come to Saint Davids. The good landlady told me to be sure and fetch both, if possible."

"Ha, haw, haw! Dis nigger had 'nough of dat town. No, no; Mass'r Bates am right dis time. I am

sorry I must leave you, Nelly; but massa will make it all right," said Tom.

The washer-woman almost despaired of making any impression.

"Where did you last see old Hard?" inquired Nelly.

"On de boat. He got off, he told, to hunt up you. Dat's whar' I seed um."

"Would you like to know whar' you will see him next?"

"Yas, but I hates him, Nelly," said Tom.

"When you and Dinah are crossing the ferry."

"No chance to talk with the old rip thar'."

"He will drive you into the whirlpool, and that will be the last of Tom and Dinah!" said the washer-woman, in a solemn voice.

"Wha' dat you say? whirl — pool. Dunno, dunno what you mention, Nelly."

"Whirlpool! why the place under the Falls what has no bottom!"

"An' drown us — kill us? am dat de meaning? Try um agin, Nelly. No scare dis nigger — yah, yah, yah! Why, Lor' bless you, the old rip must keep out o' way of our big boat, or he will run under his self; yah, yah, yah! No, no. I'm not afeerd of Hard. None too good, though; I know'd dat from 'perience," replied Tom.

The washer-woman gave it up. Her only hope, she thought, was to enlist Mr. Bates; and if she could only see him, she thought he might be persuaded to advise the fugitive differently. They presently reached the hotel grounds, and Tom requested her to wait near the door, until he ran up to Dinah's room.

Mr. Brown could not quietly remain on the hill, and having taken a shorter route, was on the piazza, conversing with Mr. Bates. Nelly heard the innkeeper call Mr. Bates by name, and she wished she could get a chance to speak with him, if only to say a few words. She beckoned to Mr. Brown as soon as she caught his eye.

“Is that the gentleman?” she asked.

Mr. Brown informed her it was, but that he talked very discouragingly.

“Can’t I get a chance to say a word to him?” she asked.

“Doubtful. But you go around into the garden, and I will bring him to you, if possible,” said Mr. Brown.

Nelly did as requested, and soon had the opportunity of speaking her mind to Mr. Bates. He discovered that she evinced more than an ordinary desire to retain Tom; and he was too much acquainted with the workings of the human heart not to perceive, also, that if she could have her own way, Dinah would be sure to return with her master. In answer to her urgent importunity to advise the fugitive to stay at the North, he said that he considered himself worthy of reprehension for holding out such strong inducements to the slave to escape from his master, and he deemed it his duty now to make a partial atonement, by persuading or at least counseling him to do what he considered to be for his good.

“Is there no hope of your aid, then?” said she.

“Not any, my good woman. And were it not that

I felt that I had injured my friend Mr. Erskine, I should not trouble myself," said Mr. Bates.

Nelly retired from his presence disheartened, and feeling that she must make up her mind to say farewell to Tom, and in all probability for forever.

Mr. Brown joined her, and learning that she had made no impression upon the fugitive in her brief interview with him, said that he would make one more effort himself.

"Plead with him, Mr. Brown, for my sake. He lived in my house so long, I feel attached to him."

The innkeeper promised to do all he could, and went back to the hotel. Tom was hurrying down from Dinah's room, and met him in the hall.

"I have just left Nelly, your old nurse. She is in agony, because you think of leaving, Tom. It's too bad, after she has taken so many steps for you, and by most affectionate watchfulness saved your life!"

"Where is she? I war guine to tell her dat massa would make it all right," replied Tom, viewing it simply as a business transaction, although he felt the deepest gratitude for her kind attention.

"She has gone to the hill," replied the innkeeper.

"Please, mass'r, tell her; wha' more can I do? An' if she will come here dis artemnoon, my young missus, Mary, will settle to her content. As for dis nigger, he's guine to ole Virginny," said Tom, and skipped through the hall, and up stairs, with more agility than he had displayed since he left the cabin.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“BACK TO OLD VIRGINIA.”

It was on a Saturday that the scenes recounted in the preceding chapter occurred; and on the following Monday Mr. Erskine and his family left the Clifton House. During the intermediate time, various efforts were made to change Tom's decision, but without avail. The planter, to his credit be it spoken, remunerated Nelly for her good care of the fugitive; and she returned to Vine street with her mind fully impressed that “people thrive most who attend to their own business.” Mr. Brown and Mr. Sharp thought they had performed their duty to the utmost of their ability, that no sensible friend of the colored race should find fault with them, and had gone home—the former entertaining harsher feelings than ever toward those whom he was pleased to denominate dealers and traffickers in human flesh; and the latter chuckling at Tom's obstinacy, but dreading to encounter the wrath of Mrs. Sharp.

The planter did not take Buffalo in his route, but passed to Lake Ontario, and disembarking at the city

of Oswego, traveled rapidly on to Saratoga. Delighted with the beautiful country, and prosperous villages through which he passed, he arrived at this far-famed watering-place, with the intention of remaining there a fortnight at least.

As the space allotted for the residue of this narrative is limited, we must quickly locate the newly-arrived guests at the hotel, and at once take the reader to Congress Spring.

It was in the morning, a day or two after the planter reached Saratoga. Frederick and Mary had gone there to drink the water before breakfast. Many of the visitors from abroad were there also. Whilst Frederick was elbowing his way amid the crowd, he overheard the remark, "there comes the slave!" and casting his eyes toward the hotel, he perceived Tom and Pompey on the sidewalk. He was satisfied that whoever made the remark intended it for Tom; and relieving himself as soon as he conveniently could from the pressure, looked around for the observer. He discovered a gentleman intently looking in the direction from which the slave was approaching the spring, and surmised that this was the person. He watched the gentleman, and presently saw him touch a person by his side, and whisper something in his ear.

"Mary," said Frederick, giving her his arm, "watch Tom; I think there is a plot afoot. We will step aside."

"What now!" said she, her feelings excited by her brother's earnestness.

"Listen."

They stood a moment or two, alternately looking at

the slaves and the two strangers. One of the latter was a tall, sleek, good-natured man, whilst the other was a short, harsh, thin-faced person—his visage indicating him to be never at ease, and continually restless with the burden of care. The former had a pleasant smile, and naturally was disposed to take the world as he found it; while the latter saw nothing that was good but himself, and always prepared to express an opinion. The phrenologist, however, would not fail to perceive one quality common to both. They possessed, in an eminent degree, the bump of fanaticism; and the size of this organ indicated that it had been well cultivated. Possibly the term we use is not vernacular; but the reader, it is hoped, understands what is meant.

“Allgood,” inquired the tall gentleman, “how do you know that is the slave?”

“Bless you, Mr. Pettibone, did n’t I see him often! It is the identical person. He is too old ever to lose the marks of the frost; he will carry them to his grave.”

“He seems to be full of merriment—particularly for one of his age,” replied Mr. Pettibone.

“Very likely—very likely. He do n’t appreciate the privilege of being a man. It is astonishing, after all that has been said and done, we should find some colored persons so obtuse. I see he knows me. I will speak to the fool!” said Mr. Allgood.

“Well, Tom, I see you do not follow my advice. Left Buffalo, your friend Nelly says, to go South.”

The slave did not pay any attention to the remark.

Mr. Allgood thought Tom did not hear what he said, and repeated it. The slave did not appear to know him.

"Why, Tom, do n't you recollect me?" he said, in a louder and more earnest tone; and laid his hand upon Tom's arm. The slave could not very well avoid noticing him.

"Know'd you! do n't dis nigger recollect dat morning when he called for help? Neber forget you, mass'r Olgood," replied Tom, with a sneer.

Mr. Pettibone observed the demeanor of the slave toward his friend, and conscious of the cause, was ashamed, and almost wished himself in other company. Mr. Allgood spoke loud enough to be overheard by half of the ladies and gentlemen present, and many of them were giggling at his expense. Unable to keep his thoughts to himself—especially upon the subject of negro rights—it seemed that he had enlightened half of the sojourners in the village with his views and opinions, although he had not been there four and twenty hours. And many of them were very happy to see him meet with the rebuff from the slave. He bit his lip, and with more blood apparently in his thin, withered face, than had shown itself there for a twelve-month, he joined Mr. Pettibone, who could scarcely restrain his risibility, and walked leisurely up the street.

"I have no patience with the slave. He don't know his rights, and so impudent. Good enough for him! I hope his master will pound him to pieces!" said he.

"Not at all, Mr. Allgood," very pleasantly replied Mr. Pettibone; "I judge the slave is offended with you for some trifling cause."

"Oh! I understand his insulting allusion! Lazy, and keeping the company of a drunken loafer by the name of Hard — and who, by the way, is a runaway — he called one morning, and actually had the impudence to ask me to open my purse and lend him money! I refused him, of course, sir; and you see what I get by it. My heart yearns, though, for the poor slave," replied Mr. Allgood.

After the great friend of negro rights left the spring, it so happened that Mr. Bates made his appearance, and was informed by Frederick of the interview between Tom and Mr. Allgood. Indeed, many of the persons who witnessed it were tittering at its ridiculousness; and Mr. Bates would have inquired the cause, if he had not been told.

"Tom," said he, "pay no attention to him. He is wild on this subject. He don't stop to look at consequences."

"He 's too stingy to be good," replied the slave.

"It did my soul good to see Tom treat him so cavalierly," remarked Frederick. "I did not know, when I first observed the gentleman, but that we might have trouble. Do you know his friend?"

"Oh! he is a member of Congress. Wild, I think, on some points, but a good sort of man. Talks more for effect than because he feels it," replied Mr. Bates

"No danger of rescue, then, sir?"

"From Allgood, do you mean?"

“Yes.”

“Gracious! no. Ha! ha! ha! He is all talk. I doubt whether he could plan a rescue. No, no; Mr. Erskine can dismiss all fear,” replied Mr. Bates, with sincerity.

“Father has no intimation of what has occurred,” said Frederick.

“Then, it is not worth while to advise him. Unless you make some new observation, I would n’t trouble your father with the news. Mr. Allgood is a very harmless man.”

“You know him?”

“Well, from reputation. If you will take the trouble to go up where he stops, you can listen to his talk by the hour, and not get a single new idea. He simply repeats what he hears others say. Give yourself no uneasiness,” replied Mr. Bates.

After breakfast, Mr. Bates met Mr. Allgood and the member of Congress in the drawing-room. They stopped at the same hotel. Mr. Allgood talked excitedly concerning the wrongs suffered by the slaves at the South, and insisted that the only redress was immediate emancipation. Mr. Bates said that his experience taught him, that they were not prepared for so sudden a transition, whilst Mr. Pettibone thought it was the duty of every philanthropist to keep the subject at all times prominently before the people. And there we will leave these gentlemen, each entertaining his own peculiar views, but agreeing upon the main question, that the time might finally come when the institution would be at an end.

Mr. Erskine's visit overrun its intended duration. The society was so pleasant, and Frederick and Mary enjoyed themselves so much, that he prolonged his stay. After leaving Saratoga, he did not hurry directly homeward, but lingered for several days at Rockaway ; and traveling by easy stages, did not reach Oakland until many days had elapsed in the month of September. Having had a most delightful tour, and unexpectedly recovered the possession of the fugitive, he was happy that he gratified his children, and thankful for his good luck. He appreciated more highly the privileges which he enjoyed, under the constitution of his country, in common with all its citizens, and learned to entertain kinder sentiments, without reference to the particular section of this widely-extended confederacy wherein they might happen to dwell.

CHAPTER XXV.

CONCLUSION.

It was late in the evening when the party arrived at the plantation. All the way from Millwood, Tom was stretching his neck to catch a glimpse of the cabin ; and when it burst in sight, he could scarcely contain himself. There it was, with the little yard and veranda, just as he left it four years before. The grass-plot in front of the quarters was there also. The

old mansion appeared as venerable as when last he saw it; and although the twilight was dim, everything looked natural.

Such was Tom's eagerness to go to the quarters, after the coach stopped at the gate, he did not wait for Dinah, but ran ahead. The master's return home waked up many slaves, and by the time Tom reached the cabin, the quarters were alive with rejoicings and congratulations. With a pleasant smile, and a kind word for all he met, the slave caught up his children with a pleasure bordering on wildness. He kissed and hugged them, his large eyes streaming with tears of joy. He had not language to express his emotions of gratitude, for being permitted again to stand upon his native soil. His return was unexpected to all, and many of his old companions supposed him to be dead. Care had wrought some change in the lineaments of his face.

"Why, Uncle Tom!" exclaimed Philisee, who, hearing the merry laugh and lively talk outside, jumped from the bed and run out of her cabin, "am you really him? Tom—de real Uncle Tom! Whar' on arth d' ye cum from?"

"Gib um, Philisee," he said, seizing her hand, and shaking it with great violence, "I alwars liked you. Lor' bless you, Phili, dat face of yourn neber looked better."

"We ar' glad you've got rid of your feelin's, an' hab missed you much. Good gracious! Uncle Tom, whar' did you git them scratches?" she asked, pointing to crumpled skin upon his forehead.



UNCLE TOM AT "HOME."

"Oh! dat's noffin! Some oder time will mention um to you," he replied; and entered his cabin.

Dinah was soon by his side, and after a separation which seemed to her an eternity, they were again together, in that same old room, where they had passed a quarter of a century. Both were delighted, enraptured! The children asked a thousand questions, until Uncle Tom was fatigued with their loquacity. His heart, though, did not tire. To him it was a banquet of love! He recounted to them many a scene, he told them how often he watched the lonely hours of the

night, and prayed that heaven's light would deign to penetrate the crevices of his cabin! And when he pictured to their horror-stricken minds, the scenes of that terrible winter—his marvelous rescue from death! the painter could have seen grief—such as nature, when the seat of life is pierced, knows, and alone knows how to depict. But enough. Uncle Tom could not go to bed—that bed! there it stood, upon the identical boards, lowly, but now to him a couch of down—more a place of regal repose than that of a slave! thankfulness gushed up from the deep fountain of his soul, and he closed his eyes in gratitude. If Mr. Brown could have looked in at the door, and heard his simple but expressive prayer, unless infested with the spirit of pandemonium, and blinded by the dark pall of bigotry—in charity let it be called fanaticism—he would have melted in humility, and thanked God also, that the slave's obstinacy repelled the wiles of Nelly's blandishments, laughed at the specious panorama of pleasures which freedom unrolled to bewilder his distracted vision, and conducted the man—born and reared in servitude, with no natural sensations but those of obedience, and the inheritor of no desire except that of happiness—back to the land of his nativity—to his master, father, home! That night, for the first time since he skulked in the by-ways, to mislead the pursuer, Uncle Tom enjoyed the sweet repose of a quiet conscience; and arose in the morning, refreshed by sleep, vigorous and joyful.

He had forgotten his fancied wrongs, and as time rolled on, enjoyed life anew. Satisfied with his lot, he

shared the feelings of his master, as in days gone by, and was humbled in his adversity and elated with his prosperity. And if the reader shall at any time chance to travel the high road, as it winds up the valley of the Shenandoah, above Winchester, he will find no gentleman more hospitable than Mr. Erskine, and no slave more contented and happy than Uncle Tom.



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